

THE
HISTORIES
OF

Lady FRANCES S—,

AND

Lady CAROLINE S—.

Written by the Miss MINIFIES,
Of Fairwater, in Somersetsshire.

VOL. IV.

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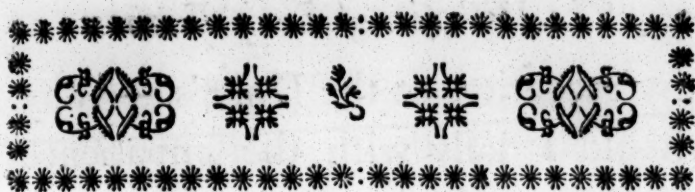
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THE
HISTORIES
OF

Lady FRANCES and Lady
CAROLINE S——.

Colonel WORTHLEY to Major
MONCTON.

LET thy Worthley's joy again
L revive in thy bosom.—And
am I so blest'd?—am I in-
deed possessed of my angelic wife?
—Oh bliss unutterable!—Forgive
this transport. You wished to know
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my reception at the Duke's.—Why should I dally with the impatience of a sympathizing heart?—Rejoice then, my friend: never was any happiness so complete as mine. Swift as the rein deer flew my faithful Busiforus towards London, as if sensible of my impatience; yet rapid as was his speed, my imagination far outstripped it. Ten thousand times I embraced my Fanny; ten thousand times acknowledged the debt I owed to duty, love, and friendship. Every little incident that happened to detain me on the road, seemed more irksome than the fatigues of a long campaign to a famished soldier. At Chester I met several of my acquaintance, among whom were Lord Easy and Sir John Rover; the former
you

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you may remember, whose good-nature when at school gained him many a stripe for the faults of others. They were all *fort joyeux*, and swore I should not go further that evening; but neither their rhetoric, or the dreary prospect of a dark night, could keep me from pursuing my journey. I was not so unfortunate a knight as to be without my adventures, one of which was so singular that I cannot forbear the particulars. My own servant I left sick at Chester, and hired another one recommended by my landlord as an honest careful fellow, and well versed in the road. We had travelled some hours before I perceived my esquire to have any other fear than for my health. Seeing me determined to

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proceed as fast as possible, and that I halted but seldom for refreshment, which he, who did not feel the pangs of absence, thought absolutely necessary, he declared that I must stop at the Three Crowns, for we should meet with no other house of entertainment for near twenty miles. We were then passing by the door, and I might have been tempted to listen to the voice of my conductor, had not my horse at that moment shewn such a spirit to proceed, that to have betrayed less impatience, would have been unworthy my love. About twelve all light from the fair moon was suspended, and not one friendly star appeared to guide us. To compleat our misfortunes; we found ourselves in the midst of a forest,
which

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which with fear and trembling, not in dread of my displeasure but his own safety, he declared himself unacquainted with, saying it must be raised by the devil, and that we should be destroyed if we proceeded any further. The fellow's apprehensions disarmed my anger, and I turned my horse to quit this enchanted spot, when I heard him exclaim, O Lord! O Lord! it is all over with us! Lord have mercy on my wife and children! I enquired the cause of his fright, and found his voice proceeded from the ground, to which he declared he was tumbled by a witch, who had bound him fast, and carried his horse into the air; though his fright was real, an immediate fit of laughter prevented

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me from assisting him, till his repeated groans awakened my compassion. Having dismounted and released him from thralldom, I could scarce persuade him, that what he had mistaken for chains, was no more than the head of a large tree, that either by design or accident, was thrown across the way. His horse having stumbled, and laid poor Sancho in the middle, stood carelessly by cropping the tender herbage from his leafy cage. Being once more remounted, we found the common road, and continued our journey without encountering any other very material adventure. The first appearance of London took from me all power of reflection; never was joy so tumultuous. I forgot

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got that it was necessary to send word of my arrival, and was posting to the Duke's when a chariot passed me, which I knew to be Lord Henry's; judge my situation, every other passion gave way to gratitude. I flew to the side of the chariot, in which sat my benefactor; the servants knew me, and had opened the door. Many people, on hearing their acclamations, gathered round it: his Lordship embraced me with such an air of satisfaction and tenderness, that the spectators, who were by this time greatly increased, and I suppose no strangers to my story, my Lord's servants being busy amongst them, gave a general shout, like what we, my Moncton, have been witness to when our brave soldiers have rent

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the vaulted sky with the sounds of victory. My Lord ordered his chariot to go on, and was so well pleased with their honest welcome, that he threw money amongst them, for which he received another shout; and was followed by their prayers and blessings. I kissed the hand that had raised me to happiness, with an overflowing heart. How sweet is it, my brother, to have the exquisite pleasure of endearing ourselves to such merit, at a price so small as that of performing our duty! I have only done mine; yet does Lord Henry every moment load me with fresh marks of approbation, and calls me the son of his bosom, the supporter of his hopes. But let me leave the bewitching subject, or I shall grow
vain

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vain of my own deeds. I went with his lordship to a tavern, and dressed with as much elegance as I was master of; in the mean time, a messenger was dispatched to the Duke's, a caution Lord Henry thought necessary, not only out of respect to that family, but for fear of the effects my sudden appearance might have on my wife and mother.—But more of this by and by.

Yours, &c. &c.

Lord EDGMOOR to Mrs. ROGERS.

CURSED mortification!—come and assist me with thy contrivances, thou infernal forcerefs; think that I have seen my mortal enemy receiving honours that might

B 5

have

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have gratified the pride of princes ; think how the soul of thy master suffered, when that old sanctified priest, whose curst piety has made him the object of my hate, moved through a crowd of applauded courtiers up to the royal presence ; the pride of fancied virtue giving him a kind of majestic haughtiness, that seemed to demand adoration. This fool of conscience, this grey-headed saint must suffer ; by my soul, he shall !—I know where he is most vulnerable, there will I strike ; fly, this moment fly on the wings of cruelty, to execute that plan of vengeance, which can alone ease the wounded mind of thy master,

EDGMOOR.

Colonel

and Lady Caroline S——. II

Colonel. WORTHLEY to Major
MONCTON.

I WAS prevented from immediate gratifying my friend's curiosity, by a particular and unforeseen engagement, but am now returned to fulfill mine to him. I understood, by the return of the message, that the ladies were gone on an airing; but that his Grace and the Duchess longed impatiently to embrace me. I was received by them with intire affection, and the Duke insisted on my repeating to him the particulars of the late siege, by which, he politely said, I had brought fresh honour to his family; her Grace bowed, in
token

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token of approbation ; and the eyes of my paternal friend turned joyfully upon me. I had just finished my little narration, when the Duke's coach appeared ; a sight that had near taken from me all power of speaking. Lord Henry begged the ladies might not be made acquainted with my being arrived, till he had first prepared Lady Frances for the news, and the Duchefs undertook to break it to my mother : Lord Henry led me to a closet, in which he said I could overhear his conversation with his niece ; and leaving me there, went to hand her from the coach. O Moncton ! put yourself in my situation ; the door was on a jar, the most beautiful of women entered, led by our common parent. That charm-

charming passage of Milton immediately struck me, where he describes the mother of mankind led by her heavenly Maker, whilst I, like Adam, stood fixed in admiration at a work so perfect. Her eyes, that once expressed a doubt of happiness, a kind of languid sweetness now seemed the residence of laughing loves that danced on beams of pleasure, proclaiming from their crystal throne that all within was tranquil, to which the animated bloom on her cheeks and dimple smile gave testimony; in short, through her whole person shone such an air of content, such a becoming liveliness, that description cannot reach, or youthful poets fancy, when they love all amiable as she was. I saw her enter, only one step
between.

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between us, yet the fear of offending Lord Henry restrained my eager feet; he judging of my impatience, told her he had that morning received an account of my being come to England. How?—when?—where? my dear Lord, eagerly asked she. From himself, my love; taking her in his arms. Come forth my Worthley, no more shall my children be parted. By this time I was on my knees before her, when my mother rushed in and claimed a share in our endearments: my adored wife began to recover her agitated spirits. Our joy was passionate, nothing at that moment could improve it; may nothing ever happen to destroy it. Adieu, my friend, make my felicity your own, &c. &c.

To

To the Same.

YOU are wounded, you say,
wounded past a cure: Spirit,
major, the pain is transient, the
pleasure lasting. Why was you not
more minute in your description of
the charmer? I will suppose her
young, lovely, perfect mistress of the
art of pleasing; well descended, and
formed for social happiness. I will
suppose her deficient in point of for-
tune; all is not right, or you would
have been more particular; allow
my suspicion real, why should for-
tune be a bar, when heaven has blest
you with affluence? But why advise
I one whose judgment is superior,
whose generosity is undoubted? I
went.

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went this morning to take a view of the house, given me by Lord Henry, in Grosvenor-square; I found it superbly elegant, the furniture magnificent, and of immense value; not from many could I bear such a load of obligations; but here, I have from my infancy been inured so to them, that, though use does not render them lighter, I am not humbled by their weight. To-morrow we shall lose a part of this very agreeable family; Lady Ormsby, the sister of my Fanny, not being used to the thick fogs of London, and finding it disagree with her, has betray'd an inclination for what she calls her native air, at a village where Mr. Nevison had the sweet satisfaction of improv-

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improving the most exquisite work of nature. Never was mind or person more replete with ornaments. Her request being granted, the old gentleman and her lord, who deserves his lot of happiness, are to attend her to see those amiable people return, for whom I have an affectionate tendre, and hear that my Moncton has nothing to obstruct his views of felicity, will be no small addition to the joy of his

WORTHLEY.

Lady ORMSBY to Lady LUCY
HAMILTON.

THE thoughts of conveying a moment's satisfaction to Ashly Park I cannot give up, even to the

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the most pleasing gratification of pride. Know then, my beloved friends, I am once more in the peaceful habitation of my early days, where, under the eye of indulgent wisdom, I was taught not to confine my happiness within the narrow bounds of self. If we walked in the fields, if we strolled into the neighbouring park, my good parent, as I then believed him, would particularize the beauties as we passed, and ask, if I did not think we were as happy in being permitted to tread that spacious field, as if we were the possessors of it? Do the hedges, would he say, seem less gay because they do not supply me with fuel? Do the flowers lose their odour, or the grass its verdure, because

cause I cannot call them mine. Must yonder field of corn, where golden heads bend to the ground, and wave in sign of plenty, must such a gift from heaven be passed unnoticed, because it is the property, perhaps, of a more deserving man? Has the fleet deer one spot less beautiful because not destined to supply my table? Does that vast prospect of valley, sea and hill, seem less extensive, because I cannot stand upon the top, and boast these lands are mine? Excuse me, dear ladies, this repetition. But why should I apologize? I know you all love my venerable parent. I told you I had taken myself from a pleasing gratification, it was receiving the congratulations of my late companion
villagers

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villagers, who came to welcome me, being delighted, it seems, that I remembered them in my prosperity.

Lord ORMSBY writes.

I Know extreme humility will not permit her to give you a just description of this pretty cavalcade that thronged in honour to my, O extatic thought! my Caroline; the task is mine; I need not tell you how my love was revered whilst she shone in retirement. The moment her return was proclaimed in the town of N ——— visits from every genteel family poured in; all shewed, by affectionate caresses and a modest distance, which she endeavoured to restrain; that it was not
her

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her rank, but merit, that engaged their admiration. This morning, as we sat at a window that overlooked a fine meadow, the sound of music called our eyes that way : a tabor and pipe, two French horns and a violin, led the van : in a minute the whole green was covered with men, women and children. Neither Mr. Nevison or myself were much surprised; she for whom the compliment was designed, was the last to imagine the motive for their appearance. Advancing almost to the window, a ring was formed, encompassing ten young women, chosen from the rest for genteel persons, all dressed in white linen vests, their hair hanging loose in their necks, and each a crown

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crown of spring-flowers on her head, When they saw us standing at the window, every one eagerly, but with great order, pressed forward. The music again struck up, the crowd fell back, and the ten young women came nearer, bent one knee to the ground, and taking the garlands from their heads, ranged them before the window: the deity they seemed to adore threw up the fash, and, by a smile, and condescending bow, repaid their homage. Mr. Nevison ordered them into the hall, where the whole company were, by turns, regaled. In the midst of their jollity I led my Caroline amongst them, and soon perceived the old man, who had been so luxuriant in her praise, when I first
came

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came under a feigned character to N——. Whilst she was engaged speaking to some, and encouraging others, I took an opportunity to give him five guineas, which he carefully put into his pocket, with a very low bow, and, I thank your honour. It was from this rustic company that she retired, after giving every one a testimony of her favour.

Lady CAROLINE writes.

MY Lord has encroached so much on my prerogative, that I will think you quite satisfied with the length of this letter. Pray let me have one soon; and tell Juliet, I long to congratulate her, on being
as

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as happy in the married state, as is
your most affectionate sister, &c. &c.

Lady FRANCES WORTHLEY to Miss
HAMILTON.

DE A R girl, why are you silent?
Lady Lucy writes ; she writes
whole packets. Ten lines from you
is become a novelty. Lady Lucy is
married ; so am I. Yet my life on
it, we have not less engagements
now than when in your situation. O
Juliet ! it is to Sir Burton Randolph
I lay your crime. If sparkling
eyes, bewitching features, luxuriant
brown hair, manly person, animat-
ed air, and enchanting address, could
mitigate his offence, these advan-
tages I would allow him : but can
there

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there be a plea in favour of one, who monopolizes, what to me is so valuable, the time of my friend? Write then to appease my rage, or expect the effects, perhaps an assassination of your agreeable—but I will not call names. Beware and tremble.

Miss HAMILTON *to* Lady

FRANCES.

I Do not tremble, dear provoking Lady Frances. Know, to your mortification, that I am innocent. Let the inclosed sheet of paper, scribbled on all sides, and absolutely wrote before my accusation—let that bring you to penitence, and me a promise that you will never wrong by ano-

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ther

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ther suspicion, the friendship of your
much honoured, favoured and affectionate

JULIET HAMILTON.

Lady LUCY HAMILTON to
Lady ORMSBY.

MAY every hour of your life, my
amiable sister, wear the same
tranquility of aspect, that now shines
on you! May my brother always deserve the share of happiness he possesses in you! How I revere Mr. Nevison! How pleased am I with the rustic elegance of your cottagers! Your character rises on me every hour. For virtue's sake I first loved Miss Dalton; who could avoid it? My obligations, the obligations of my
family

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family to Lady Caroline, raises that love to a degree beyond what I can express. The time is eagerly expected when you will brighten Ashly Park with your presence; Lady Frances and the colonel say it shall be in the first summer month: don't, my dear, let the time be longer protracted. Nothing can be more agreeable than the situation of this hospitable mansion; none can boast a genteeler neighbourhood, few so large a share of content and satisfaction. Mrs. Wentworth is a second Mrs. Worthy, except in her person, which has suffered no alteration from trouble: she is yet in the prime of life, and is often taken by strangers for the eldest of her daughters; she wears no ornaments, dresses extremely grave,

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and at the same time enjoys as great a flow of spirits as at fifteen, so that it is impossible to be dull in her company. I will say nothing of Mr. and Mrs. Temple, and Miss Wentworth; you will, you must know know them soon; with the rest of this family you are already acquainted. Nothing superb without, no useless pageantry within; the eye of the passenger can only be attracted by an ancient pile of building, which, though large, has not the air of modern magnificence; the heart of the visitor only engaged by smiling plenty, and a neat simplicity; a numerous acquaintance is the consequence of their chearful liberality, but few friendships: yet so uniform their behaviour, so encouraging their

un-

and Lady Caroline S——. 29

unreserved dispositions, that no one who shares the former, can know they want merit to engage the latter. Mrs. Wentworth seems quite pleased with Juliet's choice. Sir Burton is certainly very amiable, and then he is the most lively entertaining creature in the world. The writings are drawing, cloaths and equipage preparing, every other preliminary settled ; I believe in two months her fate will be decided, all is in so great forwardness. Tell my brother, I pray for the continuance of his happiness ; tell yourself, my beloved sister, how dear you are to the heart of your affectionate

LUCY HAMILTON.

C 3

Major

*Major MONCTON to Colonel
WORTHLEY.*

YOU have touched me, colonel,
in a tender part.—Dear Worth-
ley forgive, my disingenuity, pity my
weakness, and speed me your advice.
The pain, you say, is transient, the
pleasure lasting; that sentence reverse,
and then apply it to my case. I knew
at the time I told you I was in love,
that I had fixed my affections un-
worthily, but was afraid my heart
was too fond of the pursuit to give
it over. I am yet but half cured of
my madness, and could this moment
rant with Lee, Congreve, or Otway;
bid thunder roll, the clouds to burst
with lightning, and call the ven-
geance

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geance of the gods on false designing woman. You left me in Ireland free from entanglements.—Oh that I had still remained in that blessed situation; but—I can write no more.—I sicken with vexation,—my head grows giddy. Adieu, adieu.

To the same.

I Am a murderer.—Be not terrified,
—be not alarmed,—all is composed within.—I do not recollect what I sent you in the last packet;—grief!—disappointment!—Alas! I am not the man you left.—Come to me, my dear Worthley, or never more.—Farewel.—I am not the man I was.

*Colonel WORTHLEY to Lord
ORMSBY.*

YOU see, my dear Lord, by the two inclosed letters from the most worthy of men, that I am overwhelmed with surprise and sorrow; I leave my friends in England to try if my presence will relieve him. His intellects are not right.—God grant they are not past recovery. Present my affectionate respects to Lady Ormsby and Mr. Nevison. I am, my dear Lord, yours most sincerely.

WORTHLEY.

Lady

Lady FRANCES to Lady ORMSBY.

MR. Worthley has acquainted you with his motive for leaving England.—He embarked the same hour.—I every instant expect to hear of his arrival in Ireland. Poor Mr. Moncton, how I commiserate his misfortunes! A letter from his servant directed for Mr. Worthley, I received soon after he left me:—direful catastrophe!—I send it to you, my dear Caroline,—I love your Lord, and always unite you in my thoughts. Adieu.

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To Col. WORTHLEY.

SIR,

I Know your honour's love for my master, and take the boldness to acquaint your honour, that he has had the mishap to wound a man so much, that he lies at the point of death. My master wrote to your honour, just as he was carrying away to the prison; and he has now as neat a room as the gaol can afford; a shocking place at the best, for such a good gentleman. I am afraid too his honour is a little beside himself. I believe the sight of your honour would be of great service to his spirits, so hope your honour will excuse the boldness of

Your humble servant,

till death,

JAMES FARLOW.

Col. WORTHLEY to Lady FRANCES.

I Write you, my dearest love, from the habitation of misery. You have by this time received a letter from Moncton's servant, that confirms the dreadful hint thrown out in his last unconnected letter. I went to his former lodgings the moment I arrived, and was told, on enquiring for him, that he had been removed three days before to prison for the murder of a young man, whom he assassinated, which was, they said, all they knew of the matter. Horror, astonishment, and indignation, took intire possession of my senses: I raved, stormed, and threatened vengeance on all who should propagate that

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that vile report; then running to the prison, I desired, without any previous ceremony, to be shewn to his apartment. I will not minutely describe this scene of distress; it was too much for all my fortitude; your tender nature will not be able to support it. He knew me on my entering the room, and falling on my neck wept aloud; our tears were mingled, neither could speak. At length loosening his arms from about me, he pointed to the door, and without lifting his eyes from the ground on which he had fixed them, again beckoned me to leave him. Why, my dear Moncton, said I, will you force me from you? I obeyed your summons; I come to share in your misfortunes. He grasped
ed

ed my hand in an agony of passion ;
I am an undone man—a murderer—leave me, dear Worthley, leave me. At that instant the faithful fellow who wrote me of his master's confinement came into the room, and with many marks of joy acquainted us, the man was not dead as had been that morning reported; and further, that there were hopes of his recovery. I staid to hear no more, and leaving him to take care of his master, who seemed but little elated with the news, I went to enquire out the surgeon who attended him. Having made known the near connection of friendship that was between the unfortunate prisoner and myself, I begged to know what was his opinion of the wounded
gentle-

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gentleman, he seemed a man of
humanity and judgment, and assured
me his wounds were in a fair way.
This I desired to have under his hand,
which he made no scruple of giving
me. From his house I went to wait
on the lord lieutenant, and shew-
ing him the certificate from the
surgeon, I got a release for my
friend, myself becoming respon-
sible for his appearance if called
upon. On my return, I found he
was fallen asleep, a refreshment he
has not tasted for many days; may
it be a means of composing his dis-
ordered spirits! I am yet in the dark
as to the motive that occasioned this
rashness.—He awakes—he calls for
me—I go to give him comfort. A-
dieu, my soul's treasure.

To

To the same.

THANK God the cloud of despondency that overwhelmed the mind of my friend, begins to dissipate; a serenity succeeds, uninterrupted by those sudden starts of passion he has of late been subject to. He tells me the cause of his despair—he tells it with all the calmness of reason, and thanks providence that hath restored him to reflection. The following account he gives of himself. Soon after I left him, he became acquainted, and in love with a young lady of distinguished beauty and accomplishments, the seeming emblem of virtue, and under the direction of her mother, a widow

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widow lady of great reputation. He got introduced, his visits were accepted, and his proposals approved by the old lady. Miss Edgar returned his affections; he thought himself the happiest man on earth, 'till he discovered that she artfully carried on a correspondence with another, which was first hinted to him by a female cousin of the lady's. He took his leave earlier than usual on the next visit, determined to confute her accuser, who alledged, that every evening as soon as he left her, under pretence of going to prayers, Miss Edgar went from her mother's to a small house in the suburbs, in which lived an old woman who had formerly been a servant in the family, and was there met by her gallant,
who

who always came muffled up in a cloak.—He believed her innocent, and waited her coming out, with but little emotion;—he saw her come out;—he saw her pursue the path that led to the place of rendezvous;—not even then would he doubt her honour; he followed her steps, and saw her lover enter with her;—he could no longer doubt;—certainty distracted him:—should he tax her with her guilt,—the consequence of that was a separation,—he could not give up his love; infatuated to his ruin, he still continued his addresses; ashamed of his weakness, he concealed it even from me; jealousy cankered in his bosom, and like fire gathered strength from confinement; in one of those fits of madness, he

wrote

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wrote to me, then went to visit his mistress, and being told she was gone out, thought he knew where to find her, and running wildly to the door, was going to burst it open, but was restrained by a glimmering hope, that he might have been deceived, and she innocent. A bare possibility of its being as he wished, gave him a moment's alleviation; and seeing a small lettice through which he could discover their conversation, to that he hastened, where the first object that presented itself to his view was Miss Edgar, on her knees before her seducer, with uplifted hands and streaming eyes; rage, frantic rage, came like a sweeping deluge over his soul, and carried away every trace of reason; he burst through

and Lady Caroline S——. 43

through the door, and sheathed his sword in the breast of his rival, on which Miss Edgar fainted. The moment he had done the desperate deed, he went, and resigned himself into the hands of justice, confessing what he had done, and 'twas before they carried him to prison, that he desired a pen and ink to write me the last few lines I received from him. A packet is this instant brought him from Miss Edgar;—I fear to give it him, lest the contents may again affect his returning reason, yet it may contain a balsam. Every instance he can now received of her perfidy, will help to cure his ungovernable passion, for through a thin disguise I can discover that he still loves her.—

Sup-

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Suppose I open it;—'tis friendship, not curiosity, that inspires this thought; if I think it salutary, it shall be administered; if not, I will suppress it.—'Tis done;—Miss Edgar is innocent, and I will send you her letter as soon as I have the major's permission; but before I shew it to him, I go to visit her.—My friend will again be happy.—I kiss the hands of my benefactor; and am, my dearest, best love,

Yours eternally.

To the same.

MISS Edgar is a deserving woman; Moncton is satisfied of her prudence, and suffers as much from extreme joy, as he has done from

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from extreme sorrow; he would now give the world, had he never suspected her, and curses the woman who planted the thorn of jealousy in his breast. But before I proceed, it will be necessary for you to read her letter, which, by the major's permission, I have inclosed.

Miss EDGAR to Major MONCTON.

YOUR dark suspicions of my honour has made me doubly unhappy. You have brought on me the imputation of a criminal intrigue, and perhaps taken from me my only brother; yes, sir, the person whose life you aimed at, was my brother. I am told you resigned yourself into the hands of justice.—Rash, inconsiderate

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siderate man, why did you ever doubt the purity of my heart?—Why have you overwhelmed me in sorrow?—Our connection is at an end; yet, if to be assured of my innocence will lessen the part of woe you have brought on yourself, of that I will convince you. My father, though a bigot to the church of Rome, fell so much in love with my mother, that he offered at any compromise, except giving up his avowed principles. —His person was fine,—his fortune so alluring, that though strongly attached to the established church, she could not resist the temptation, especially as she was to have the intire education of her daughters, and by the same agreement the sons were to be trained up in the principles

ciples of my father. He poor man, did not live to fulfil his part of the contract; Heaven interposed and snatched him from earth so suddenly, that he never saw either of his children; we were born within a few hours of each other, and not more than a month after my father's death. My mother, though she sincerely regretted his loss, comforted herself, that both her children would be brought up in her own persuasion, which she could never have hoped whilst he lived; a thought that had greatly disturbed her. We were scarce a month old, when my father's relations came to claim my brother in order to bring him up in their principles, producing the contract signed by herself; on her
re-

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refusing to deliver him up, they forcibly entered the nursery, and notwithstanding all her resistance, carried him off, exulting in their barbarity. My mother being a woman of great resolution, instead of wasting time in unavailing complaints, hastened to the lord lieutenant's, where her wrongs were redressed; after giving her story an uninterrupted hearing, he ordered the child to be restored, and threatened to punish the offenders for an unlawful cruel outrage. After this accident, she was particularly cautious what servants were placed about us, many efforts being made to get him from her by stratagem. When my mother thought him of a proper age, she acquainted him with her reasons

reasons for keeping him at home under the care of private masters; but said, now he was of years to be careful of his own liberty, she would consent to his removing to any of the public schools. He was then fifteen, his person manly, his judgment nervous, his passions violent, good-natured to a fault, and difficult to be convinced of any imposition practised against him: joined to these contradictory qualities, he had great sensibility of soul, and a heart susceptible of beauty. He eagerly caught at my mother's proposal, and promised to treasure up all her injunctions: but above all, as she said, to avoid the declared enemies of his salvation. Two years has elapsed since he left us, in which time we

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have seldom seen him, my mother being kept quite easy, by his frequent, and very dutiful letters. A few days past an old servant, who had formerly been his nurse, informed me privately, that my brother was in town, and desired to see me at her house, on some very urgent affairs, which it was not proper my mother should be made acquainted with. I went at the hour appointed, excusing my absence to her, and was received by him with unabated tenderness. I enquired what had brought him to Dublin, the occasion of his disguise, and why he had not given my mother the satisfaction of seeing him: Peace, my dear sister, said he smiling; you know she is bigoted to her way of think-

thinking, that though my happiness were at stake, she would not give up the least particle of her enthusiasm. How! Sir, returned I, all amazement; what do I hear? Have the arts of our persecutors prevailed?—Will my brother sacrifice his duty?—Patience, Emily, interrupted he, you mistake my meaning;—be more composed, and I will tell you my intentions.—But why am I so minute?—It is enough that I satisfy you of the motive for my meeting him clandestinely. He had, it seems, fallen into the net so long spread to entangle him, contrary to his promise, had been drawn in to visit a distant relation of my father's, who, no doubt, promising himself great glory, if he could make this wished-for proselyte, stuck at no-

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thing

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thing servilely mean, and cringing, to accomplish his design. Searching the bent of his inclinations, he discovered love to be his predominant passion, and immediately sent for the most artful of his relations, a young woman endowed with every charm of person. This was a bait he could not resist. But before his ruin was perfected, a spark of duty revived in his bosom, and taking himself privately to Dublin, he determined to use my interest with my mother, joined to his own solicitations, in order to obtain her consent; and intended to use as a plea in his favour, - that he would preserve the same privilege as she had done in her marriage with my father. I saw with astonishment how determined he was to pursue

pursue this scheme, and that it would be in vain for me to urge any thing in opposition ; so contented myself with receiving a promise that he would do nothing precipitately, and that he would wait in his concealment till I should find a proper opportunity to break it to my mother. This I delayed doing, still in hopes heaven would supply me with arguments to conquer his prejudices ; and with joy perceived every interview made some impression on his heart. On my knees I was trying my last effort, when you madly rushed in and sheathed your sword in the breast of my beloved, my then irresolute brother. Alas ! into what distress have you plunged me ! should his life be taken from him, I

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must appear against you at the bar of justice: but God all merciful avert that dreadful blow which would be fatal to me.—I am this moment told you are released from confinement, but that you are ill, extremely ill.—My mother, my brother, unite in your forgiveness; let that comfort you in your distress.—I pray for your recovery.

EMILY EDGAR.

Col. WORTHLEY, in continuation.

ON going to Mrs. Edgar's house, and inquiring for the young Lady, I was conducted to a genteel apartment, where in a few minutes she appeared. Not knowing from whom I came, she wore no marks
of

of confusion on her face, which was placidly serene and perfectly agreeable ; but when I mentioned Major Moncton, calling myself his friend, she betrayed strong emotions, but soon again recovered her natural composure. I represented in as lively a manner as possible his love ; the unhappy circumstances that appeared to alarm it, his great contrition, and the situation to which he was reduced. She heard me with melancholy attention, thanked me for the trouble I had given myself ; but said, whilst her brother's life was in danger, she could look on the major in no other light than his murderer. Suppose, I replied, her brother should recover, which in all probability would be the case, may he then

D 4 hope ?

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hope?—Here she interrupted me.—
Your appearance, Sir, bespeaks my
confidence, my heart is above disguise,
I wish not to aggravate his punishment,
and was to blame in hiding
that part of my affairs from him, that
concerned my brother.—I have suf-
fered for my fault, he is likely to
recover, and already forgives the un-
premeditated blow.—He is generous,
and may be the first to propose a re-
conciliation ; my mother too loves
the major, perhaps we may still
be happy. There was such gene-
rosity of sentiment in her decla-
ration, that I left her full of admi-
ration and respect. As I have now
seen my friend recover his spirits,
and am assured he will have an in-
terview with Miss Edgar, as soon as
her

and Lady Caroline S——. 57

her brother sits up, no second consideration can have power to hold me one moment from my dearest, best friends. Adieu, my love, I can never be happier till I again see you.

Miss HAMILTON to Lady ORMSBY.

YOUR Ladyship's wishes in my favour are extremely kind. You hope soon, you say, to congratulate me on becoming the wife of Sir Burton Randolph. Not so soon, my dear Lady Ormsby, as you and my other friends may imagine. Though I have chosen my shackles, no putting them on till I have your Ladyship for a witness, with what grace I resign my liberty.—Delays are dangerous;—besides, he threatens me with a whole

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army of beauties ready to engage in his rescue, if I pretend to play the tyrant. So to prevent a mutiny, bring up your corps de reserve, and I am ready to settle the preliminaries. Till then, I remain in statu quo. Your Ladyship's most obedient, &c. &c.

Lady FRANCES WORTHLEY to Lady ORMSBY.

WE are invited to a ball given by the Duke of R — to-morrow evening. I have, my dear Caroline, prevailed on her Grace to be of the party; you know her aversion to appearing in public, which could not be overcome by all our persuasions, till Mrs. Worthley was also prevailed on to give us her company. Tell your Lord I wish much to see him
your

your escorte, to convince the world, a polite and tender husband is not so very a phenix as many imagine it to be: and why such examples of domestic happiness are so seldom found amongst us, is obvious; when taken from the arms of our nurses, we are surrounded with what are generally called preceptors, whose business it is to fill our minds with flattery, our heads with intrigue, our memories with cards, and our hearts with self-admiration; in these accomplishments being early instructed, our educations are finished; and at an age when we should be learning our samplers, we are thoroughly initiated into every part of high life; we visit, we frequent assemblies, have our public routs and select parties, shine constant-

ly

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ly in a side-box, and at last caught by fine person, or a fine fortune, without any real tenderness for the man, we dwindle into wives; after the first three months, the novelty is over, both find their mistake, the lady complains she has lost his affections, the husband that she never attempted to keep them, from which proceed upbraiding and recrimination, separate apartments at home, a total contempt for each other abroad, nobody pities them, and they become even the jest of their domestics. You, my dear, can know few such instances; indeed I hope there are less of them at this time in the kingdom, than have been known for many ages; the great example of conjugal happiness, every one seems fond of follow-

and Lady Caroline S——. 61

following. Miss Hamilton, it seems, will not resign her liberty, till she sees us at Ashly Park. Sir Burton, who is all impatience, writes me a threatening letter, if we are not there by the time we first proposed; so if it is agreeable to your Lord and self, I believe I can answer for mine, tho' he is not yet come from Ireland. You have already tasted sufficiently the sweets of the country; return then, my dearest Caroline, bring with you your better half and our venerated friend, who will not be the least welcome; we all still owe him great gratitude.

To

To the Same.

I Mentioned an invitation to the Duke of R——s; I said too we were to be favoured with my mother's company; she continued in the same intention till the hour of dressing; but then complained of a pain in her head, and begged to be excused. Mrs. Worthley, I believe, was in the scheme; for in fact it was plain to see neither had the least inclination for going. My uncle was that evening dressed with unusual magnificence, and was rallied on so agreeable a change, which all observed with the highest satisfaction. My dear Mrs. Worthley said, whilst my mother was absent, she had never
seen

seen his Lordship look so handsome since her first acquaintance with him, recollection rising a half sigh, which she would not let escape, for fear it might check the present chearfulness of his spirits. He replied, that since those days, he had not enjoyed so large a share of tranquility ; I now see, continued he, serene happiness on every countenance ; I see you, madam, pleased with the tender friendship of this family, particularly her Grace, to whom you are every hour dearer than before ; I see another daughter sent to us, by a peculiar act of providence, adorned with every qualification, that can add a lustre to her birth ; I see my Worthley in possession of all his wishes, my Fanny restored to the affection of her parents,

rents, and her parents now deserving the most grateful duty of their children. These events have given me so sensible, so true a pleasure, that though a batchelor, I mean to celebrate them as if they were my own nuptials. Thus, my sister, does our good uncle make his happiness consist in yours, in mine, in every one's, that is blessed with his affection. I never saw a better conducted assembly, than that at the Duke of R—s; the grandeur of the room, the fineness of the music, the numberless lights that reflected from twelve large crystal chandelieres, the elegance of the side-boards, and the brilliancy of the company; all together had so noble an effect, that had a foreigner been conducted into the room, he might
have

and Lady Caroline S—. 65

have mistaken it for the court of some opulent and magnificent prince who had amassed together the whole riches of his kingdom. The most shining figure in this most shining assembly, was Lady Milford, who is just returned to England, and this her first bridal appearance in town. Suppose a withered face of three-score, decorated with every ornament of fifteen, no cap, no handkerchief, an immense quantity of jewels and cloaths, the same bloom and colour of a peach blossom, adorned with silver flowers which had the most cruel effect on her complexion, notwithstanding its obligations to art for an immoderate deal of rouge: seeing this splendid unhappy couple, made me congratulate myself

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myself on my own escape, for unhappy they already are to a superlative degree. His Lordship observing my father, went up to him with his same forward air that I have so often seen him assume; but not meeting with so cordial a reception, he looked somewhat mortified; however, it was not long before he recovered his usual effrontery; and, would you believe it, my dear? had the assurance to accost me in as familiar a manner as if our former acquaintance had been on the most agreeable footing; but I soon shifted him off my hands, for congratulating me on my union with Mr. Worthley, I could not help telling him, with a look significant enough, that Mr. Worthley, as well as myself, were
sensible

and Lady Caroline S——. 67

sensible of our great obligations to his Lordship. My uncle and father were both near when I said it, and seemed pleased with my spirited reply, which relieved me from any more of his impertinent civility. I shall conclude my letter with a paragraph, this morning, in the St. James's paper: "We hear that a treaty of marriage is on foot, and will speedily be concluded, between Lord Henry S——, brother to the Duke of——, and Lady Elizabeth F——, daughter to the right honourable the Earl of H——." What foundation there is for this report, I leave you to judge; however, it has afforded us high matter for rail-
lery, which my uncle endeavours to stop, by declaring himself wed-
ded

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ded to the memory of his first love.—
He comes!—my hero, my husband
comes!—Forgive me if I leave you
abruptly.—He alights!—he flies
to meet your affectionate

FRANCES WORTHLEY.

Lord ORMSBY to Sir WILLIAM
HAMILTON.

YOU have known me immersed
in vice.—You have seen me re-
stored to virtue, and witnessed my
felicity in being possessed of her, on
whom my soul doated. Prepare now
for another alteration more strange
than either; but on your life, as you
value my friendship, let not a word
I write escape your breast, not even
to my sister.—Would you suspect
that,

and Lady Caroline S——. 69

that, O Hamilton ! that my wife, the fondest, tenderest, best of women, despises, hates—avoids me ; yes, she loaths my caresses, she flies my embraces ; and yet, by all my hopes of eternal happiness, I have given her no new cause for this—My God ! by what name shall I call it ?—This distrust, this cursed suspicion---always in tears ; if I press to know the occasion, she answers me with sighs, whilst her eyes turn thoughtfully on the ground, and her cheeks seem to flush with stifled indignation.---It is too much to bear,---by my soul, it is !—In this situation have I passed three whole days. My torments are not to be expressed.---I am perplexed by a thousand chimerical apprehensions ; she appears
before

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before Mr. Nevison with her usual goodness. He does not mistrust the cruel state of my mind. He believes me happy; so does all the world; would I had no reason to say, they are deceived. Yet, witness heaven, I do not accuse my Caroline; her mind is unspotted; her soul pure as the martyred saint. Tell me, Hamilton, might not this change be the fruit of my own former baseness? But to suppose that, would be to suppose her ungenerous; yet, perhaps, it may be so.---I will no longer expect to find all perfection in any human form: in this opinion I am strengthened by an incident that happened yesterday; I left her with Mr. Nevison, and retired to a solitary walk, to indulge, uninterrupted, my own gloomy ideas.

ideas; after examining my late actions, with the strictest and most unprejudiced scrutiny, in which I could find nothing to accuse myself, I returned into the house, and going to Lady Ormsby's apartment, found her sitting alone, with a letter in her hand, her eyes red and swollen: You are reading, my dear lover; I interrupt you. Nothing very material, my Lord, she replied, endeavouring to conceal her emotion, only some letters, that at times I take a pleasure in perusing; and then she sighed, as if her heart was breaking. Indeed, my Caroline, I cannot support the sight of your melancholy;---you must no longer indulge it;---retirement but nurses your dejection: let me, my love, conduct
you

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you to town : your father, mother, brother, sister, all petition your return. This was a proposal she could not consent to, at least for six weeks or two months, and was sure her friends would not wish her to leave a place, from the air of which she had already received such benefit.---Miss Hamilton will be happy to see you.--- Ashly Park is in a fine part of the country; the air as healthy, the situation more agreeable than this : you will rejoice my father and sister : Lady Frances and Mr. Worthley will meet you there; and there, my dear creature, let me attend you.--- She would consider of it ; at this time she could determin on nothing, and begged I would not, for the present, press her

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and Lady Caroline S——. 73

her further on that subject. I said, if she would promise to recover her chearfulness, all places on earth would be alike agreeable to me ; for it was only her ease and happiness that I consulted. She thanked me for my anxiety on her account, but in such a manner, as gave me no room to hope the change I so much wished for. Seeing a paper on the floor, and taking it up, I found it wrote in my own hand, and superscribed to you, which, I suppose, she had dropped in putting into her pocket. I returned it, saying, I imagine this is a letter I formerly wrote to my friend Hamilton, on an event that I could not, even then, think of without horror.--- Sir William Hamilton is a good man,

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my Lord, returned she ; he believed your contrition real, or Lady Lucy had not pardoned you, or our fates been united. Thus by dark hints and perplexing doubts is my bosom torn, my plan of happiness frustrated, and my quiet destroyed. She will come to no explanation, which I have, on several occasions, endeavoured at, particularly in our last conversation : sometimes she evades it by pleading indisposition, sometimes by an affected cheerfulness prevents me from complaining ; or, if I tell her I see through the disguise, she taxes me with unkindness in suspecting her sincerity : in short, I know not what to do, how to speak, act, or think. If I discover my uneasiness to Mr. Nevison, he cannot relieve it;---

and Lady Caroline S—. 75

and why should I declare the foibles of the woman I love, when it can be of no consequence to my peace? Rather let me silently sink under the weight of my calamities, than by publishing them, perhaps draw censure on my Caroline. Only you, Hamilton, shall witness what I suffer; and that I suffer innocently; for ought my former guilt, in this affair, to be considered? All was revealed; she knew, and she forgave it.--- Write to me, write soon, and tell me how you would proceed in my situation.---It is she by all my hopes!---I see her, my friend, this instant stepping into her chariot in a dishabille, and unattended; she doth not know I see her; she thinks me gone abroad.--- How charmingly

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she

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she looks!---Hate betrays itself in her step; her cheeks glow with unusual brightness; her eye speaks.--- O Hamilton—it cannot be. Confusion!---I'll follow unperceived. Now may be the critical moment to unravel this mystery.---My God, restore her to me good, kind, and faithful, or cut the thread of my existence.

To the Same.

IN vain I explore my deep unfathomable fate.---I followed her chariot wheels, but not being able to gain sight of her, tired with the search, and having lost the track, I am come back to brood over the melancholy thought of being miserable,

ferable, without knowing the source of my misfortune; through what channel they proceed, or how to stop their currency: but whatever is my lot, I must learn to bear it like a man.---Lady Ormsby is returned; I cannot go down to her till I have framed my mind for the purpose.—On second thoughts I will go to her; perhaps urge her to satisfy my doubts.---No, I will not do that, but send to desire her company a few minutes in my closet:---yet will not this appear too much like design?---It may so; I will pursue my first intention: all must seem the effects of chance: I will assume a coolness in my manner when I accost her; which, Heaven knows, is foreign from my heart; if that does not

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alarm her, if she shews the same indifference to my flights as she has done to my vows of everlasting love, her affection must be lost past recovery ; I know in that case how to proceed : England shall not longer give shelter to the most unhappy of men.

To the Same.

OUR conference is over.---I am dead to all comfort.---I go to hide my miseries in a foreign land. ---My father, sister, and you, my Hamilton, adieu ! Think no more of the lost, undone, afflicted,

ORMSBY.

Mr.

Mr. NEVISON to Lord HENRY S —

EXCUSE, my good Lord, the trouble a wretched old man is about to give you. The fear of alarming, too abruptly, your noble family, has made me apply myself, first, to your Lordship, who may discover to them the particulars of a misfortune that must fall heavy on them, as your superior discretion shall direct. Once I was in hopes my sun would set bright and unclouded, and that I should carry my grey hairs down to the grave in peace; but now I have only to pray, that my days may be shortened; that I may not live to see the most supreme happiness of wedded love,

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converted into the most pungent sorrow, the most piercing woe of woe! ---O my child, my child! support her, gracious Heaven!---Pardon me, my Lord; my old heart cracks asunder, when I consider the mournful tale I have to unfold.---Lord Ormsby has deserted Lady Caroline.---He leaves her for ever.---He goes where he never more can be heard of.---Strange revolution of fate!---This she tells me, and this is all I am yet acquainted with.---Never was man more deceived; I believed them happy as our first parents, when in their state of innocence.---Cruel certainty! why am I not still deceived?---Alas! my daughter!---Yet I must do his Lordship the justice to declare, though he
has

and Lady Caroline S——. 81

has bereaved me, that no man could appear more sensible of the blessings Heaven showered on him: he seemed to doat on her very words; her joy was his; her will was his will; nor did I ever perceive the least abatement of his love. Judge then, my Lord, what was my astonishment, to find Lady Ormsby in a fit: she had been gone to her room but a few minutes, when hearing her cry out, I followed, but not time enough to prevent her falling to the ground. She had been reading a letter which his Lordship has left behind him, and which, I suppose, contains some reason for his mysterious conduct. Her Ladyship now seems more calm and composed. I ask no questions, for fear of awaken-

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ing her sorrow, which has been so violent, that life struggled for its empire: God grant you, my Lord, resolution to disclose this malignant stroke to the parents of the excellent sufferer, and them to receive it with resignation.

I am,

with all due respect,

your Lordship's most obedient servant,

EDWARD NEVISON.

Lord ORMSBY to Lady ORMSBY.

I GO, madam, from your sight;—I banish myself for ever from your presence;—yet by all my wrongs, I mean not to cast an odium on your conduct; I mean not to call to your remembrance the distrust, the unkind

kind indifference with which you have treated me for several days; may that, with every other thought, that would give you a moment's pain, be buried in oblivion.—If my friends ask, what is become of me, say, I am ungrateful, that I was tired of my own felicity, and am fled from it; say, that I am unworthy your regard; say any thing to the world; but I charge you, wrong not my honour, by suffering your heart to suspect my love.—Had you explained yourself a few moments since, which was the last conversation we can have together, all might have been well: for if it was my former actions, which I acknowledge were criminal, that occasioned the cool contempt with which you treated me; I would
have

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have renewed my vows of penitence; I would even have sacrificed my life to have convinced you, they were sincere. If you have any new cause to hate, and despise me, I would soon have conquered your prejudices, by confronting my accuser, which I could have done with innocence, though he had assumed the form of a minister from heaven's tribunal. Dear as you are to me, I resign even you, rather than bear the exquisite torture of living in a continual state of mean distrust, to have my passion returned with discontent, my love with constraint. My heart weeps tears of blood, whilst I bid you adieu for ever.

Sir

and Lady Caroline S—— . 85

*Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON to the
Earl of——*

MOderate, my dear Lord, your grief. I am just arrived in town, and hope in a few hours to send you news that will be a cordial to yours, and Lady Lucy's spirits; I told your Lordship, on receipt of your son's last letter, I thought I could trace that black affair to the fountain's head. I still continue in the same opinion, and have dispatched a servant to Lord Edgmoor's, to know if he is in town, after which I shall concert my future plan of operations. I suspect him, because I know his character to be that of a most artful plotter, who will stick at nothing
to

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to accomplish his purpose, particularly if fired by revenge; a passion he is most subject to. The frustration of all his late schemes have, no doubt, awakened that fiend in his breast. So strongly am I prepossessed, that he is at the bottom of this affair, that nothing less than absolute conviction can change my sentiments. Don't be apprehensive for my safety; depend on it, I will take no step to its prejudice. I look upon cowardice to be the characteristic of a villain: my life then can be in no danger, perhaps I shall not have occasion to put it to the least risk. I will fight him with his own weapons; artifice will be more necessary than sword or pistol. I have already been to wait on the
Duke's

and Lady Caroline S——. 87

Duke's family, which I found in great distress; Lady Frances Worthley and the Colonel were hastening down to N——— to visit Lady Ormsby; the Duchess I did not see, she has kept her room ever since she knew the trouble her daughter was in; as for the Duke, he walks about like a man bereft of his reason by a sudden blow of fortune; Lord Henry stays to console them, so does Mrs. Worthley: no others of the family are privy to the accident, nor indeed can it be too cautiously concealed, as I have no doubt of every one being restored to their former tranquility.—My servant is returned from Lord Edgmoor's; his Lordship is not in town, so I expect to find him at Heartly Abby; for which
place

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place I intend setting out in two hours.—If I can once discover the serpent that has rolled himself up in this mysterious occurrence, the next thing to be considered is, how to find out Lord Ormsby, for I am convinced he has not yet left England; though should I be deceived, I will not see your Lordship again, till I discover the place of his residence, and bring him back to you, and to his happiness. In the mean time, I will write to Colonel Worthley, to make a diligent search round the village of N—— to find if he can discover him concealed there; for whatever were his intentions, I think his fondness for Lady Ormsby will not suffer him to go far from that place, at least, till he sees what effect

and Lady Caroline S ——. 89

effect his letter has produced on her. I write to Lady Lucy by this post; and am, my dear Lord, with respectful duty to yourself, and compliments to the fire-side at Ashly, your Lordship's most dutiful and obedient servant.

*Lady FRANCES WORTHLEY to the
Duchess of ——.*

I Shall endeavour to obey your Grace's commands, in letting you know the situation in which I found my sister, on my arrival at Mr. Nevison's. That good man was sitting by her bed-side, for till we came down, she would admit no other person to her apartment, so that he was both her nurse and her com-

comforter ; the former office I have now taken on myself, the latter he still continues, and not without success : the attentive pleasure with which she listens to his arguments, makes it visible that she gathers consolation from them. Her Ladyship has not yet had spirits to relate any particulars, but tells me, in general, she hopes and believes Lord Ormsby is the injured person ; if so, that she only is to blame, that she shall never enjoy a moment's quiet, till she is satisfied of some circumstances, of which she is at present doubtful; and whenever she speaks of her absent Lord, her eyes overflow with tears. Mr. Worthley has received a letter from Sir William Hamilton, desiring him to search diligently for his
Lord-

Lordship in this neighbourhood, where he imagines him to be concealed; but all our efforts have hitherto proved ineffectual. I pity him more than I can express. The letter which he left behind hath strangely prepossessed me in his favour. Mr. Nevison acquits him, so does my sister, of the least failure in his affection to her; yet says she has entertained suspicions to his prejudice; and should they prove without foundation, which she had now reason to think they would, she should have no repugnance in declaring to the whole world, that she had given him sufficient cause for his leaving her, that the blame may fall on the guilty, and not on the innocent. She is for ever talking of him, and feels every

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every pang she supposes him to suffer ; yet is determined never to see him more, till what she has to accuse him of can be cleared up to his honour and reputation. As soon as she is able to hold a pen, your Grace will be informed from herself of every material circumstance. She regrets that she has occasioned so much pain to you and my father, and prays to be forgiven. The servants here know nothing of their Lord's absenting himself ; and Mr. Nevison's prudent management has prevented any suspicion in the neighbourhood, on what account he has left it. I hope soon, madam, to send you more satisfactory intelligence ; and am, with the united and affectionate duty of my sister and Mr. Worthley to your Grace,

and Lady Caroline S——. 93

Grace, my father, and other kind friends, my dear mother's most dutiful and obedient.

*Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON to Lady
Lucy.*

WILL my love condescend to open a letter from a footman? Will she stoop to receive declarations of regard from the servant of Lord Edgmoor?—Say you will, or I dare not approach till I have thrown off the badge of my servility. Don't think I jest, it is even as I have said; but if you doubt it, come away to Heartly Abby; inquire for Mr. William Hase-ly, and you will see your Hamilton transformed into the smartest valet of the age, a glaring livery, spruced hair

hair and clean napkin hanging half over his pocket; then Mr. William is so nimble, that all my fellow servants seem to envy my agility, fearful, perhaps, I shall soon become the favourite of their Lord: in short, I am at present at his Lordships devotion, and propose great wages to myself at the conclusion of my servitude. I shall tell you how I got advanced to this post of honour, in order to give you an opportunity to admire my dexterity. Having concerted my scheme before I reached the neighbourhood of Heartly Abby, I went to the house of Mr. Dearcy, my Lord's steward, of whom I had some knowledge, and told him I called in my way to N—, to shake him by the hand, which he acknowledged as a high honour; and pressed

pressed me so earnestly to drink a glass of wine with him, that had I not before designed it, I should hardly have been able to refuse his invitation ; a first, second, and third bottle was called for, your health and the Earl's drank successively, till the wine had operated so powerful on his communicative heart, that it was ready to give up its whole contents, if I had been as ready receive them ; but avoiding the detail he would have given of his own and his Lord's affairs, I turned the conversation on family œconomy : for my part, I said, living chiefly in the country, I intended to regulate my affairs within a narrow compass, particularly in the article of servants : my intentions met with his approbation, and he declared them an honour

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honour to my judgment, wishing half the gentlemen in England would follow my example, shaking his head and saying, it would be better for some of them to my knowledge. I had one servant, I said, whom I should be more sorry to part with than the rest, as he was remarkably clever and honest; but my wife, Mr. Dearcy, my wife has taken up a strange antipathy to the fellow; and women, you know Mr. Dearcy, will have their way in such matters as these. Ay Sir William, and in every other, replied the poor man: I have been married these thirty years to little purpose, if I don't thoroughly know their tempers. And then he begun a long account of his wife's ability in the discipline of her family,

family, which I interrupted, by declaring the pleasure it would give me, if I could get William Hafely (which was the name of the fellow I intended to discharge) recommended to a good service. The luckiest thing in the world, Sir William! replied he, getting hold of my hand, which he shook very heartily; I am proud to have it in my power to serve you, and will get the young man into my Lord's family. I know he wants at this time a smart clever servant, and he never takes any so soon as those which I recommend to him. In this my purpose was answered. I accepted his offer without hesitation, desiring him to execute his design the first opportunity, having the fellow with me,

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whom I should be glad to discharge, if I was sure he would be provided for immediately, by which means I should have an opportunity of obliging my wife, who in the main was a very good woman. After considering a few minutes, he said he was engaged to go into Warwickshire early in the morning, on some business that would detain him at least a fortnight; but, however, that, he said, should make no difference, for he could give him a letter to Lord Edgmoor, which would answer as well as if he went himself. This I thought the luckiest accident that could happen, for had Dearcy remained near Heartly Abby, I might have been detected, notwithstanding my design, which I have since executed, of chang-

changing the colour of my hair, from fair to black; this, by the help of a lead comb, I have done effectually, so that I never can be discovered, should any of my acquaintance happen to drop in, whilst I continue my disguise. Having obtained what I wanted, a letter to Lord Edgmoor filled with the praises of honest William Hasely, I took my leave of Mr. Dearcy, after wishing each other agreeable journeys, and so forth. This morning I waited on his Lordship with my credentials, and was received into his service; having first dispatched my own horses and servant to N——, with letters to Colonel Worthley and Mr. Nevison, whom I have apprised of my intentions. I am this day to wait at

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table, being neatly equipped for the
occasion.—The dinner bell rings ;—
my time is no longer my own, yet I
will always find a moment to assure
my dear Lucy, she shall for ever
command her

WILLIAM HAMILTON,
alias WILLIAM HASELY.

To the Same.

HAVING gone through the duty
of the day with applause, I re-
tired from the fatigues of my new
occupation to unbend my mind, and
congratulate myself on the success
that is likely to attend my indefati-
gable endeavours. It is true, I have
not yet come at any thing material,
but have reason to hope I shall soon
get a master-key to unlock the se-
cret

and Lady Caroline S——. 101

cret I am in search of. Our dinner-bell summoned me to join the rest of my party-coloured brethren, who were assembled together, and having received the instructions of the butler, I ranged the dishes with admirable dexterity; after which, I was ordered to stand behind a chair placed at the head of the table, whilst another gentleman of the cloth was detached to let my Lord know all was in order. Seeing chairs placed for three, I waited with the utmost impatience, to discover what company his Lordship had with him, being determined to ask no questions, to avoid giving room for suspicion by my inquisitiveness, as well as for another reason; for though I had condescended to put on the appear-

ance of one of them, I cannot bend my heart to talk with any degree of familiarity to those mean servers of iniquity. I can observe, my dear Lucy, the same vein of riot and impiety to proceed from the apartment of his Lordship, down to the very lowest offices of drudgery. My Lord's voice, accompanied by two female ones, in a loud laugh, rouzed me from a philosophical reverie that I had fallen into on considering my own metamorphosis. The door opening, his Lordship, attended by two ladies, made their appearance; the eldest took her seat in that chair to which I was consigned, the other on her right-hand, and my Lord over against her: the women eyed me from head to toe, and there seemed something

and Lady Caroline S——. 103

thing more than curiosity in the eyes of the young one, which gave me no very high opinion of her prudence; she was all together extremely pretty, and would at other times put on an air of the greatest modesty that infinitely became her, but of which she could as easily divest herself. This I observed on several occasions, which, was I to repeat it, might shock the delicacy of your ear. The old!—What shall I call her?—What name is expressive enough of wickedness for the wretch who prostitutes her own child, and with infernal pleasure beholds her quick advances to perdition? This blot of nature is the vile Rogers, who had so large a share in the designed ruin of your brother, and

whose commands I was ordered to obey by my Lord, with the same readiness and punctuality as I would his own. The other was a daughter whom she sold to Lord Edgmoor, to procure those superfluities of life that fortune had denied her the possession of by any other means. I have no doubt of their being necessary, if any new scene of villainy has been carrying on ; and the sight of them at this critical time, is what has fed my hope with the most flattering food of success. I could gather whilst I was waiting, that Miss Rogers has been absent from Heartly Abby, by Lord Edgmoor's frequently repeating his uneasiness at her absence ; but observed at the same time, there was great caution
used ;

used ; that their conversation turned on none but indifferent matters, with now and then a double entendre from the ladies or his Lordship. But I forgot to tell you the compliment Mrs. Rogers bestowed on me ; I believe this fellow, my Lord, will do very well, said she, turning round in her chair, and staring me confidently in the face ; I like the look of him, he seems active, and fit for your Lordship's service ; to which his Lordship was pleased to make a condescending reply, and Miss look'd as if she was quite of her mother's opinion. I am not very vain of my person, but as nature seems to have given me some charms in the eyes of this young inamorata, I shall not let so material an advantage lie idle ;

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but turn it to the use I think most likely to restore the Earl a son, my Lady Lucy a brother, Lady Caroline a husband, and a friend to your

HAMILTON.

To the Same.

I AM dismissed, degraded, my livery stripped off my back, and turned out of doors with mercy. Poor William Hasely! No more art thou the envy of thy fellows! No more shall the good Mrs. Rogers encourage thee with her praises! No more shall her amiable daughter cheer thee with the glances of her approbation! Alas! to what am I reduced! even to the necessity of bidding adieu to all my new acquired honours.

honours. Yet, Fortune, I thank thee, that in the midst of my disasters, I shall carry with me by stealth—Yes, my Lucy, I am now possessed of all my heart can wish. I have enough to make us happy. I have discovered the very fountain of iniquity. And next, I thank thee Providence, for having inspired me with a thought of searching for it. I hinted as if my design was to attack the heart of Miss Rogers, being convinced it was not secured by a very strong fortification: but this I intended as my last resource, in case every other attempt failed, either to have my suspicions realized, or proved altogether groundless. The ladies having taken a great liking to me, I was ordered to shew my skill at the tea-table.

table this afternoon. Hearing them laughing to excess, I stopped short with the tea-board in my hand, and listened attentively to their conversation, laying my ear to the door, where I could plainly distinguish the following dialogue. Sing that song to me, dear girl, said my Lord, which, like the tuneful syren, drew the ideot to destruction, and compleated my vengeance. Indeed I must do my daughter the justice to think she has executed your Lordship's commission, beyond every thing we could have hoped, considering her youth and inexperience. Ay, and she shall reap the advantage, replied he. I will, for this new service, settle on her three hundred a year for life. I thought this a glimmering light for
me

me to pursue; but as I could no longer remain with safety in my post, was obliged to quit it, and make my appearance among them, which luckily did not put an end to the interesting subject. My Lord again requested Miss Rogers for her song, though not in the same words; and was answered with, Good my Lord, pray excuse me,—your Lordship will dislike it;—it is so dull, so doleful a ditty, so full of inconstancy, and cruelty of men, that it is fit only for the design, on which I recollected it, and must give your Lordship the vapours to hear, and me to sing it, on any other occasion. Well, well, you are a charming girl, I will not importune you; 'tis enough for me, that I know you have
sung

sung it to the purpose. At which they looked on each other, with a sort of significance, that I could easily unriddle, nor could any longer want an explanation from whence their dark hints proceeded. Thus, without regarding the baits Miss Rogers threw out to allure me, I was, without seeming to do it, busily employed in treasuring up every word that passed. But not contented, though convinced by them, that my surmises were well founded. I once more, on my being dismissed from waiting, took my stand at the communicative key-hole, where my information was soon compleated. You will excuse me from a repetition of their words, as it can do honour neither to decency, nor humanity;
from

and Lady Caroline S——. III

from which I will only collect at large the villainy of their actions. I could discover that his Lordship, through an unprecedented hatred to Mr. Nevison, had given his sanction to a scheme, contrived by Rogers, and executed by her daughter, to destroy his peace, by striking at that of Lord and Lady Ormsby's, over the success of which they were still exulting. Miss Rogers seems to have been a principal machine in this black work; she repeatedly received the thanks of Lord Edgmoor, and praises of her mother, on her assuring them, that she had sown the seeds of jealousy too effectually in the mind of Lady Ormsby, ever to be rooted from it. It is sufficient for me to know that her
Lady-

Ladyship has been imposed on, by herself. We shall be informed what means were used to cover their deep deception. Your brother will again be happy, as we shall all, in his speedy re-union with his Lady. Having got what intelligence I wanted, and going immediately into the servants room, I assumed an air of good-humour, and conversed with them as familiarly, as if I had really been what my dress bespoke me. After talking for some time pretty freely of the family, I said, Mrs. Rogers, between them and me, was no better than she should be; and as for the young lady, shrugging up my shoulders, I was convinced I might have her favour on easier terms than my Lord. Accordingly, as I
sus-

suspected, one of the fellows whom I had that afternoon superseded in his office, took an occasion to repeat my words to some of the female attendants, so that it arrived with no small addition to the ear of Mrs. Rogers; in consequence of which, I was disgracefully dismissed the same hour, accompanied with many opprobrious invectives from the ladies, for the liberty I had given myself in daring to speak disrespectfully of their characters. By this, I think, I give you no small specimen of my policy; for had I left them without being guilty of any fault, for which I could be regularly discharged, it might have caused some suspicion of the truth, when Lord Edgmoor finds his villainy has taken
air;

air; and I am determined he shall never know the stratagem I have made use of, to detect him in it. I even carried my disguise so far, as to endeavour at palliating my offence, begged pardon, and promised amendment; which concessions were received just as I could with them; and I am now setting out for N—— to communicate the success of my enterprize, and endeavour to find out Lord Ormsby; undeceive Lady Caroline, and restore her husband to her affections. "Till all these things are accomplished, my Lucy must not expect to see her ever faithful

HAMILTON.

The

and Lady Caroline S——. 115

*The Earl of—— to Sir WILLIAM
HAMILTON.*

HOW shall I thank you, my dear son, for bringing me back that peace I was so near losing. Your last letter to my daughter found me—O gracious providence, it found me, in the arms of my Ormsby. Good God! how did my aged heart leap, when I beheld him on his knees before me! A blessing so unexpected, so un hoped for, poured on my soul a flood of joy, beyond what my poor remains of strength were able to support. Lucy's too was great; but, thank Heaven, it has not affected her health. When he heard on what account you left
Ashly

Ashly Park, and the success that was likely to attend you, he promised privately to wait the event with us; but notwithstanding Mrs. Wentworth, her daughter, Miss Hamilton, Mr. Temple, all joined their solicitations with ours, to prevent on him intirely to lay aside his resolutions of leaving England, in case the event might not succeed to his wishes, he was immoveable, till your last letter confirmed our happiness; ten thousand joyful acclamations were echoed to your praise; my daughter blessed the hour that made her yours. My Ormsby was quite overcome by his obligation; and never was you so dear to the heart of your rejoiced and affectionate father.

Lord

and Lady Caroline S——. 117

*Lord ORMSBY to Sir WILLIAM
HAMILTON.*

ACCEPT, my Hamilton, my friend, my brother, the sincerest offering of gratitude and affection, for having, a second time, saved from ruin a man seemingly devoted to it. How different is my state of mind from that in which I wrote you my determination to fly from my friends, my country, and all my happiness! Following the dictates of prejudice and passion, I set out immediately, on my leaving N——, for London, in order to embark for Dover. Pursuing my journey in pensive silence, I had time to reflect on the distress my abrupt departure would plunge

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plunge my father into, whose fond affection for me merited another return. I considered too, that his age would but badly let him bear the shock; that he was addicted to a dangerous disorder in his stomach, and, perhaps, that I might be the means of hastening him to his end, which would fill up the measure of my woe. This determined me, before I proceeded any further, to go to Ashly Park, and take my leave of him and my sister; in consequence of which, I arrived here, and was most tenderly received. Inquiring for my Hamilton, I was soon informed how much I was indebted to his unparalleled friendship. I now with pleasure can think of my return to N—. Arts, you say, have been used

and Lady Caroline S——. 119

to deceive Lady Ormsby; you say too, you will restore me to her love: do but that, my best Hamilton, then will your generous work, and my felicity, be compleated. Tell her I will not attempt to see her till she commands me to return, though a bliss my heart eagerly pants after. Tell her, if she thinks me wronged, the only restitution I hope, is the liberty of throwing myself at her feet, and receiving the blessed assurance of my being still beloved; and tell her I have then attained the summit of my wishes. The task, I know, will give you pleasure, when you can convince my Caroline that I am innocent; that I suffer till I am permitted to assure her in person, my love is fervent, and unabated, as
when

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when our hands were joined in the sacred presence of him who can only disunite them. As for the vile, abhorred Edgmoor, he shall not interrupt my opening views of love and happiness, by obtruding himself on my thoughts, till the prize, which he had robbed me of, is again restored to my possession; nor will I even then chastise him according to his high rank, but to the groveling lowness of his actions. I have wrote, by this post, to the Duke, Duchess, and Mr. Nevison. Adieu, my brother. Recommend me to the continued friendship of Col. Worthley, and Lady Frances.

Lady

Lady ORMSBY to Lord ORMSBY.

YOU have, my Lord, desired, by Sir William Hamilton, that I will recal you from your voluntary exile; it is a request I cannot comply with.—Indeed I cannot yet consent to see you; for, should my dear Lord return, receive me with affection, and after knowing how much I have wronged him, by my too easy credulity, thinking me unworthy his love; should he then treat me coolly, or with reserve, my punishment would be too severe: but if after being acquainted with the true reason for my behaving in the mysterious manner I have done, if you can know the undesigned

VOL. IV. G fault,

fault, and forgive the offender, return, thou dearest, most beloved of husbands, to a wife made sensible of her own happiness. You know from sir William Hamilton, to whom I am for ever indebted, that he has discovered Lord Edgmoor, with the two Rogers's his accomplices, to be the contrivers and executers of a scheme, cruel as it was artful, excelling in both to interrupt our joys, and damp the pleasure my dear old parent enjoyed in beholding it. The mazes used to entangle me were various, and without knowing it, I became a principal agent in the plot against you, my Lord, and against myself. The moment of my unhappiness begun from the evening of that day, which your Lordship

and

and Mr. Nevison, in consequence of repeated invitations, were gone to pass with Mr. Ashelford: you may remember it was always my custom, when favoured with your Lordship's company, to stroll away an agreeable half hour, either in the garden or neighbouring meadows: so walked our first parents in the flowery garden of Eden, in bliss supreme, 'till Eve, too credulous, incautious of her safety, and unacquainted with the envious spirit that designed her ruin, ventured from the side of her protector, and was undone. I too, in my walk, met a serpent, but instead of golden fruit, I was tempted to rebel by bitter poison that flowed from her venomous tongue, which must have

been as fatal, without a particular interposition of heaven in my favour. I shall now begin, my Lord, to recount every incident that has helped to mislead me, and effected our separation. The air happened to be that unlucky day remarkably calm; the warm sun of summer seemed then to have made its first appearance, and threw such enlivening rays over the face of spring, as gave a serene gladness to its aspect, as rearing its infant head from the lap of winter. Having enjoyed the prospect a considerable time from my window, I went into the garden; finding it agreeably warm, I took a Telemachus in its fine original language for my companion, and sat down in that little alcove, where

my

and Lady Caroline S——. 125

my Ormsby first declared he loved me; on that scene my thoughts were fixed; when they were called away by the sound of a voice enchantingly melodious. Hastily laying aside my book, I went into the garden, looked round me, searched every walk, but could discover nothing; at length, going to that side which is only divided from the meadows by the clear and beautiful river you have so often admired, I perceived a woman sitting at the foot of that elm, which bends its lofty head over the meandering stream, and serves to shelter from intense heat; the playful inhabitants which Mr. Nevison delights to see roving on that agreeable spot. Her attitude prevented me from a view of her

person, her back being towards me; and unwilling to interrupt the entertainment I received from her melody, I went softly to the brink of the river, and silently listened to her song; the words of which were more plaintive than the tune, and both calculated to soothe the most profound melancholy. There being at the bottom of these fields a common path that leads to the village, I imagined this was some stranger led by curiosity to take a nearer view of the house, as every thing in these little places attracts the notice of passengers; and in this opinion I was going back, but was tempted from my design by her beginning another song, which I suppose was the same that Sir

William

William Hamilton heard Lord Edgmoor requesting the young Rogers to sing, and which, he was pleased to say, had drawn the ideot to her destruction; but, thank heaven, his designs are frustrated: the words of this last had in them something singular, and were often interrupted with sighs and sobs, a circumstance that much alarmed my curiosity; and going to the door that leads into the fields, I stood concealed, the better to observe her actions: by the time I got round, she was standing up with her face towards the garden, and her eyes fixed on the water; there was a peculiar sweetness in her appearance, that demanded my attention, and I admired the loveliness of her person, not knowing

that I was gathering thorns to plant in my own bosom: my surprise is not to be expressed, when lifting up her hands and eyes to heaven, in a silent ejaculation, I saw her prepare to plunge at once into eternity: she had one foot over the brink of the river, when I gave a violent scream, and springing forward, came time enough to prevent her intentions, which I then believed to be real, but can now see through the whole artifice. For God's sake, madam, said I, observing she looked confused and disappointed, what means this rashness? What has occasioned a woman, seemingly in her senses, to attempt a deed, that both reason and religion start at? She made no answer, but was sullenly turning
from

from me, when I stopt her, fearing she might again be desperate; begging she would suffer me to conduct her into that house, where she should find a safe asylum. Whatever were her afflictions, my miseries are incurable, replied she, nothing but death, can relieve me; 'tis in vain, madam, whoever you are, to attempt saving me from perdition. Though sadly frightened at her menace, I tryed to calm her grief, which was counterfeited to admiration; and having succeeded tolerably in my design, she requested I would suffer her to give me a short sketch of her life and misfortunes; when, she was sure, I would no longer blame her intentions of putting an end to both, the latter being insupportable, the

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former hardly worth preserving. She said her name was Douglas, of Scotch parents; that about three years since, she had been decoyed to London by a young nobleman, who falling in love with her, as he was passing through the town where her father lived, had used the basest means to bring her to infamy, and at last but too fatally succeeded; since that time, he had behaved in every other respect with more tenderness than she had reason to expect; but being lately married, she resolved to take that opportunity of forsaking a life that had always been disagreeable to her; that in order to induce her to comply with his request of still continuing with him, he had represented his lady to be a
woman

woman of so easy a disposition, that she might even make one of his family, without being mistrusted, in quality of a house-keeper; that if she had any objection to this proposal, she should remain in whatever part of London, or wherever else she pleased, if she would permit him still to visit her; but that she resolutely withstood all his solicitations, though her situation was rendered more deplorable, by a visible likelihood of bringing into the world a witness of, and a sharer in, her disgrace. The great repugnance she now felt to vice, determined her, she said, in better resolutions, rather to prefer the most severe want of indigent repentance to splendid grandeur, and a heart hardened

dened every hour by repeated crimes. Finding she could no way avoid her seducer whilst she remained in London, harraſſed by his perpetual importunities, and purſued from place to place, ſhe privately quitted it about a fortnight after his marriage, and took an obſcure lodging about ten miles from N——, where ſhe had been obliged to part with what little matters ſhe could call her own in the days of her innocence; having left behind her every valuable preſent from the author of her guilt; that this ſmall reſource being quite exhausted, and the people where ſhe lodged treating her with the greateſt inhumanity, ſhe was turned out friendleſs, deſtitute, and forlorn, without money and without peace,

to

to pursue her destiny in an un pity-
ing world: the day before, finding
herself within half a mile of N——,
she took shelter in a poor cottage
belonging to two old people, who
had given her a night's lodging, but
were too necessitous themselves to
supply her wants; and the fear of
starving had drove her from obscure,
to more public poverty. She then
produced some wretched scraps of
provision from her pocket, which,
she said, a charitable christian had
given her, as she passed through the
town, but that her famished appe-
tite now loathed, what some hours
since might have relieved it; that
the same person had directed her to
this house, and advised her to make
known her extreme indigence, for
that

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that it belonged to a clergyman, who was full of compassion for the unfortunate. Your goodness, madam, continued she, convinces me I have not received an exaggerating account of the mercy and benevolence of your disposition; I say yours; for sure you must be an inhabitant of this sweet mansion. I told her she was not mistaken, that she should ever find a kind protectress in me, who had it in my power, as well as inclinations, to place her above the reach of want, where she might indulge her happy alteration of mind, which must, in time, restore that inward peace, the loss of which she so much, and so prudently lamented. This, and a great deal more, I said to comfort her, being melted by
the

the judgment of her words, the modesty of her looks, and the distresses of her life. She threw herself at my feet, seemingly overcome by gratitude, and thanked me in the most graceful manner ; calling me the saviour of her life, of her eternal happiness, which she should have forfeited past redemption, had I not snatched her from suicide and murder ; both which, another moment must have compleated. Having raised her from the ground, and placed her by me, being in the alcove, to which I led her before she began her relation, I begged she would satisfy me, how she was tempted to perpetrate a crime, the blackness of which, she appeared so thoroughly to be acquainted with, particularly as she
had

had reason to expect her necessities would end with Mr. Nevison's knowledge of them. Not having resolution, madam, replied she, to stand in the presence of a man, whose character was so much superior to my own, I sat down under that tree where you first discovered me, to compose my thoughts, and collect sufficient courage, to lay my situation before him, my crimes, my penitence, and throw myself on his mercy for protection; applying to reflection for the means, I was miserably disappointed; for instead of finding the aid I stood in need of, my reason and my hope were swallowed up in a depth of despondency, which I was endeavouring to avoid; I would have fled from
danger;

danger ; I called my thoughts back ; I tried to allure them by music ; I sung to compose them, but in vain. All nature to me seemed gloomy ; so clouded was my soul, that the chearful sun which shone with heavenly lustre, looked chearless and obscured to me ; all was chaos and confusion. If, madam, at that moment you had not come to my assistance, my darkness would have increased, and I must have been for ever, ever, ever lost. At this period she threw a handkerchief over her face, and laying it on the table, sent out such piercing sobs as pained me beyond expression. Fearful of a relapse, I did not interrupt her grief, but intended, when she grew tolerably calm, to ask the name of her seducer, which she had
hither-

hitherto concealed; not to satisfy any insatiable curiosity of my own, but to get some provision made for the unfortunate child, which I thought might be done without Miss Douglas appearing in the affair, or discovering her retreat, which I proposed to make secure and agreeable. I was debating within myself, in what manner to accomplish my scheme, fixing on my dear Lord to be the means of getting some small restoration made to the poor injured creature; when rising hastily from her seat in fresh disorder, and taking a picture from her bosom, this—this, madam, said she, is the villain,—furiously striking the insensible piece;—this is the villain that must one day answer for all my crimes; and may
ven-

and Lady Caroline S——. 139

vengeance, vengeance overtake him!
I caught a transient view of the likeness, as she held it in her hand. My eyes started from their orbits, every limb trembled with convulsive terror, when I beheld the exact portrait of my Ormsby. Fired with resentment, rage, despair, and jealousy, I snatched it from her; and, O my Lord, forgive the injuries my suspicions did your honour; disclaiming the endearing tie between us, I despised, I even hated you; my blood, which impetuously rushed into my heart, deserted it as suddenly, as if frightened from the horrible mansion; and I fell, grasping the imagined proof of your perfidy, and my own misfortunes. I have been more circumstantial than the case required,

to

to convince your Lordship my error has not proceeded from want of affection, but rather from an overflowing of it; for had I not loved to excess, my grief had been but inadequate, and I might have acted in the same manner, without feeling that agonizing pain, that excruciating torture, which I suffered, whilst doing what I believed to be no more than common justice to myself, to virtue and generosity, by holding that man in abhorrence, who had so basely ruined an innocent young creature, and me so cruelly injured. I did not, my Lord, though at first so fatally alarmed, too hastily condemn you; the wicked wretch corroborated her evidence by many artful contrivances, before I fell their victim.

The

The giddiness which seized my head in the alcove, was neither lasting nor violent; and, by the assistance of the hateful Rogers, now no longer Douglas, I was raised from the ground, and reeled, all pale and trembling, into the seat next me. Beginning to recollect myself, I considered the cause I had given for her to suspect my being your wife; and not chusing then to discover it, I said I was subject to faintings, particularly whenever my mind was agitated either by joy or grief; and that her situation had made me feel the latter to an uncommon degree. The readiness with which she received this evasion, a little surprised me; being convinced such strong emotion betrayed itself in my voice,

voice, countenance, and actions, as would have revealed the true state of my heart; especially as on other occasions she did not want a large share of penetration. Without seeming to suspect her veracity, I determined to be satisfied of it, and telling her I would provide a house fit for her reception, in as short a time as possible, I asked whether she would have any objection to return, till that could be accomplished, to the house of those poor people whom her necessities had obliged her to forsake; as by going into another family, she may alarm their curiosity, and perhaps discover that which, if once known, might subject her to mortifications, which, in the manner I proposed, may be intirely avoid-

avoided. In this I had a double motive; one, that I might be a witness, whether her distress was real; but the most prevalent was, that should I find your Lordship to be really the source of her infamy, I might have it in my power to keep your secret, by secluding her from society, till she had given breath to the innocent unhappy child, and I found a distant and safe retreat for her, determining if that should be the case, to take a step, the pain of which I am already too thoroughly acquainted with. With well-dissembled tears, prayers, and thanks, the supposed Miss Douglas accepted the terms I offered; and rising from her seat, said she would go back to her cottage, which she said she hoped to reach before it was quite dark. Whilst taking her
leave

leave I suddenly resolved to accompany her, and made known my design, under pretence of setting her down in my chariot, as too much fatigue might be of ill consequence to a person in her condition. Whatever veil I attempted to throw over my words, I soon perceived it was too thin to keep her from the real meaning; as she assured me, if I so far condescended as to look in on her now happy asylum, rendered so by my unmerited goodness, I should be convinced that her misfortunes were more than fiction, and not exaggerated in her relation of them. The resolution with which she spoke, the joy she discovered at my intentions, and the probability of her being no impostor, were near reducing me to the same extremity occasioned by
my

my first discovering your Lordship's picture, which I was obliged to return ; but intended at a proper season to tell her who I was, and to get it from her, as a proof of her having resigned every spark of tenderness for the original. As I was stepping into the house to order my chariot, thinking I should return before your Lordship, I heard your voice in the court, talking to Mr. Nevison, and running back into the garden, I hurried five guineas into Miss Douglas's hand, begging she would excuse me from going with her that evening, an accident having happened that made it impossible. She saw by my eagerness, how much I wanted her absence, and seemed as earnest to take her leave as myself. When

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she had given me directions where to find her, I fastened the door after her, and went into the house, where the sight of you threw me into such an agitation, that to avoid your finding out the true reason, I was obliged to pretend the evening air had given a chill to my blood; with your usual goodness, alarmed for my health, you insisted on my retiring immediately, which I readily complied with; and when you would have come to my room, if you recollect, I sent your Lordship word I was inclined to sleep; but instead of that composing friend, I entertained in my bosom the most terrifying companions, such as suspense, despair, and anger. If I called to mind your tender behaviour to
me

me as your wife, my thoughts brought back to my view Miss Douglas and all her sufferings: if I looked on her as an impostor, her being possessed of your picture, her great appearance of veracity, her readiness to admit me to see the very scene of her want and misery, banished that glimmering hope. Sleepless and full of tormenting ideas, I counted every hour, at the first appearance of morning left my bed, and intended to visit Miss Douglas before you was stirring. Something I must go in search of, it was not peace, it was not comfort, it was a confirmation of my misfortunes that I expected; but was obliged to lay aside my purpose, by your Lordship's getting up soon after me; nor

could I find a moment's opportunity to effect it, in that and the two following days, in which time your repeated acts of affection, the tenderness with which you received my ill humour, the pains you took to overcome my melancholy, the unaffected ease and innocence that appeared in your words and actions, almost staggered my belief. Hearing your Lordship say you was going abroad, I immediately ordered my chariot, and supposing you gone, followed the direction of Miss Douglas, and was set down at the bottom of a field, by the side of which stood the house, or rather hovel, that I came in quest of, the first view of which struck me with the highest conception of want and beggary; but

but when the door opened, in consequence of my knocking at it, and I took a survey of this habitation of misery, my wonder and compassion were so much excited, that I stood for some moments in silent admiration, scarcely thinking of the business that brought me to it: in the corner of a room stood a bed spread over with a tattered coverlid, and put me in mind of Otway's witch in the *Unhappy Marriage*, being composed of many coloured rags, that spoke variety of wretchedness; three old chairs, a spinning-wheel, some coarse brown porringers, and a few wooden trenchers, took in the whole inventory of their goods: yet with all this visible poverty, there was a neatness in every thing I saw, that

made me think industry and extreme want were not incompatible. Upon my enquiring for the young woman their lodger, a very old one who addressed me said she had left them the day before; but seeing me look surprised, I suppose, madam, continued she, you are the gentlewoman Nanny Pilkington said she expected; and turning to a man, who seemed the emblem of winter, and was sitting by the chimney, in which mouldered a handful of dust, that had no other appearance of fire than from the smoke that it occasioned; Go, husband, said she, and bring the little bit of paper Nanny left for the gentlewoman, which I am desired to deliver with her humble duty; by which I found the old couple

and Lady Caroline S——. 151

couple were strangers to her real name and situation; but could assign no reason for her abrupt departure, till the following note, carefully sealed, was delivered into my hand.

MADAM,

Chance having discovered to me that you are the wife of Lord Ormsby, and that I had flown for shelter into the very neighbourhood of my seducer, I think it but safe, both for your Ladyship's peace and my own eternal quiet, that I should fly far from him. As soon as I think I have found a place of safety, I will do myself the honour to reveal it to you madam; and may your Lord restore to you the happiness he has robbed me of. I already forgive him, and shall

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think

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think if he endeavours to deserve your Ladyship's affection, that he has made some restitution for the wrongs he has done your Ladyship's most devoted, and ever grateful servant,

ANN DOUGLAS.

I asked how long the young woman had been with them, and found it tallied exactly with the account she had given me of herself. Would you, my dear Lord, imagine such arts, such deceptions could have been devised? Never was there a deeper scheme of villainy, and but too well did it succeed; for on my returning home, full of despair and resentment, your Lordship came to me with a coolness in your manner, which I construed in the most disadvantageous

and Lady Caroline S——. 153

tageous light. You saw it was in vain to press me to an eclaircissement of my conduct, which must to you appear cruel and ungrateful; you fled from me: the letter you left behind you first began to open my eyes; and the intelligence Sir William procured in the character of Lord Edgmoor's servant, compleated my cure; and trust me, my dear Lord, there is no danger that I shall ever again relapse. I have examined into the characters of the old couple at the cottage, and find them to be good and honest; I intend doing something for them, as they are both past their labour, and no doubt were too imposed on by the artful designers of my ruin. I will not add another moment by my insignificant comments, on what

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I have

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I have already wrote, to the tedious absence of my beloved Lord, if he is disposed to return to the heart and arms of his late afflicted, but now, in hopes of a re-union, rejoiced and affectionate wife,

CAROLINE ORMSBY.

*Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON to Lady
LUCY.*

LORD Ormsby arrived here yesterday, and was made happy by the tenderest reception from his lady. Now, dear Lucy, tell my aunt she must lay in provisions for a whole army of volunteers that I am going to head, and march into her castle. Tell Juliet, she must expect no mercy, that she will be forced to surrender.

and Lady Caroline S——. 155

der immediately ; and tell my friend Randolph, that he must prepare to take charge of the prisoner, not to let her escape at his peril. In plain English, we are coming down to Ashly Park, to pluck the wing of a partridge with my aunt ; see my sister give her hand to Sir Burton ; have a dance on the occasion, and then hie away for Audly Castle, every one his own commander ; where we are to be joined by the Duke, Duchesse, Lord Henry, and Mrs. Worthley, from London. What a noble cavalcade ! it is pity they cannot all grace Juliet's wedding ; but she must be content ; she will have her share of good folks. By the time I come up with my detachment, I suppose Harriot will want a principal employment :

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ment : she must not expect the office of bridemaide ; tell her so in season, that she may not be disappointed. We will have our two handsome neighbours, Miss Farnhams : it shall not all be done in the family way ; if there be any thing else that she has an inclination for, let her speak in time that she may be enrolled in my list, as I shall have the disposing of every place for that day ; and, if she behaves well, perhaps I may provide her with a smart partner, one after her own heart. As for you, my dear, and Lady Frances, the Colonel and I have already agreed to barter you in the way of exchange : married people should compassionate each other ; besides, it would be unpardonable for us to engage the young folks without
being

and Lady Caroline S——. 157

being able to give them a chance, at least, that they may lead us a dance for life. I have only in this given you my intentions at large; Friday seven-night I shall, in person, descend to particulars, and will then depute you, and the other ladies, to act in your respective stations. Caution my aunt to guard her heart against Mr. Nevilson, who comes in my division, and has charms more dangerous than youth or beauty: tell her this, my dear Lucy, from yours, &c. &c.

The Duke of—— to Lord ORMSBY.

IT exasperates me to think of the villainy that has been practised against your Lordship. I have not endeavoured to keep the affair a secret; the

the whole court is acquainted with it. Edgmoor is become a general ridicule ; nay, so much is he despised, and laughed at, that I think his impudence must surpass even his wickedness, if he ever again dares to shew his face in public, where only contempt and shame await him. Now, my Lord, by your own, my daughter's, by all our expectations of happiness, I conjure you seek no other satisfaction ; in my opinion this is most honourable ; any other I look upon as mad revenge. The sting of his infamy, which he can no longer conceal, will recoil on himself, and pierce more than the sharpest sword ; and the disgrace he is subjected to, will lodge deeper in his proud heart, than the most unerring ball your hand

hand could send to it. Sir William Hamilton is entitled to the most grateful returns in my power, for the material share he has had in your reconciliation with my daughter; as neither have been to blame, there can be room for no disagreeable reflections on either side to disturb, or again interrupt your union. I hope soon to meet you at Audly Castle, on a party from which we all propose the highest satisfaction, particularly, my dear Lord,

Yours affectionately.

Colonel WORTHLEY to Lord HENRY.

WHAT pleasure would my best benefactor have received, had he been witness to the tender meeting

ing between Lord and Lady Ormsby? Like those who feel the first return of ease after extreme pain, so appeared the reconciled pair. Heart-felt gladness sparkled in his eyes, and glowed upon her cheeks. What a sudden transition from grief to joy, from gloom to cheerfulness! It was a sight that gave an inexpressible, a general satisfaction to every pleased spectator. But Mr. Nevison I shall never forget, his transport was almost equal to the united lovers; he hugged them to his bosom; he wept from very extacy, and sobbed an inarticulate petition to heaven, no more to disappoint his hopes in them. I now see Lady Ormsby in her most amiable light; though nothing can be greater than the duty with which
she

and Lady Caroline S——. 161

she treats the very name of her natural parents; it does not interfere with that boundless affection Mr. Nevilson has certainly a right to claim from her. She waits on, she respects, she consults him, with the same view to his ease, the same deference to his opinion, as if she thought herself dependent on his bounty, and obliged by the law of nature still to revere him as her real parent. Thinking of Lady Ormsby's, reminds me of my own debt. Perhaps no man had ever higher notions of gratitude; perhaps no man had ever half the reason to to be grateful. Grant me, my dear Lord, the only request you ever yet refused me; suffer me to tell you the transport I experience, reflecting that it is to you I owe my fortune,

love,

love, and happiness; that it is to you my mother is indebted for the peace and comfort she enjoys in her declining age. From you I have received the best of wives; from you she has received the best of daughters. But let me not risk your Lordship's displeasure by dwelling longer on a subject, which you was once pleased to say, was the only one that could endanger my incurring it. Lord Edgmoor is flown; the publication of his shame having reached his ears, England by that means has got rid of its greatest dishonour. What is become of the two Rogers's I know not, but suppose he has taken with him these valuable machines of mischief; for I fear he is too much hardened in his crimes, ever
to

and Lady Caroline S——. 163

to be the profelyte of virtue. In compliance to your Lordship's inclinations, we shall shorten our visit to Ashly Park, that we may sooner pay our respects to you at the castle. We propose to take London in our way to Mrs. Wentworth's; and on Wednesday, if nothing happens to prevent my wishes, I shall have the honour to kiss the hands of my benefactor; and am, &c. &c.

Lady FRANCES WORTHLEY to Mrs.
WORTHLEY.

THE momentary embrace I got from you, my dear madam, in our way to Ashly Park, which we happily reached the same evening, seemed no more than that transitory

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ry pleasure one sometimes receives from a delightful dream. To see you, to be with you but twelve hours, how short the fleeting satisfaction ! How valuable your presence ! My mother declared to Lady Ormsby and myself as we were alone with her, that she had more real enjoyment from your entertaining conversation, than ever she felt from applause, even when admiration had its greatest charms for her. If she writes, her letters are filled with your name ; if she talks, you are the subject of her conversation. In short, she looks on you as her sister, companion, and friend. Could you, dearest madam, once have thought fate had in store for me those blessings I now possess ? How sweet is the reflection on the
time.

and Lady Caroline S——. 165

time I spent at Audly Castle! With what pleasure do I call back every incident that happened to me there! From that moment when the protector of my earliest years first fondly recommended me to your affection, to the latest of my stay at the castle, what a joyful turn has my affairs taken! since I beheld the partner of my happiness enter the music room, led by my uncle; since I yielded my heart to his merit; since I suffered my curiosity to get the ascendancy over my resolution, and discovered that I was beloved, then I was full of uneasy doubts: but now how securely happy! I delivered my uncle's request to Mr. Temple, who writes to his Lordship by this post, that he complies with it, and
will

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will attend him to Audly Castle, as soon as Miss Hamilton's marriage is celebrated, which Sir William is determined shall be done in a public manner. We are all impatient for the reason of my uncle's desiring Mr. Temple to go to the castle with him, before the time fixed for our visiting that beloved place which I left with regret, think of with delight, and shall see again with rapture. My Colonel and Lord Ormsby will have it that we are to be surprised by some additional beauty in or about the castle, and that Mr. Temple's judgment is required to assist in the work. All this is likely, for without a doubt, he possesses the finest and most extensive genius of the age. Well! I can only wish
the

and Lady Caroline S——. 167

the time arrived, when our curiosity is to be satisfied, which cannot be, my uncle declares, till we meet at his country house, as he calls it. I fancy you, my father, and mother, are privy to the design ; for on recollection, I saw you smile and look on each other when it was first mentioned ; but I do not ask you to reveal it. I shall have greater pleasure before the time arrives in guessing at the secret, than half my sex will find in explaining all the conundrums set forth in the Ladies Diary for the year. I am delighted with every part of this family: Mrs. Wentworth is chearfulness itself, and treats her visitors with all the polite freedom and tenderness of a parent : Mrs. Temple is extremely delicate,
she

she has a fine complexion, shining brown hair, her eyes peculiarly sweet and full of sensibility, her other features small and regular, with all her mother's genteel liveliness, good sense, and affability: Miss Wentworth has not the personal advantages of her sister; but the engaging gentleness of her manners, the elegant ease that appears in all she does or says, a fine judgment joined to a becoming diffidence, without the least mixture of disagreeable reserve, makes up for every other deficiency. These three ladies, Lady Lucy, Miss Hamilton, the Earl of — Sir William Hamilton, Mr. Temple, my Colonel, Lord Ormsby, Sir Burton Randolph, and Mr. Nevilson, make up the circle, at which
pre-

and Lady Caroline S——. 169
preside happiness, hospitality, cheer-
fulness and bounty.

My dearest mother, adieu.

Major MONCTON *to Colonel*
WORTHLEY.

I Propose soon to revisit England,
and shall bring with me a lady
in whose esteem you stand highly
rated. Your presence, my dear
Worthley, first awakened returning
love in her bosom ; your character
she was not unacquainted with ;
and to hear that you honoured me
with your friendship, gave me in her
eyes no small degree of merit. I
need not tell you that Miss Edgar,
now Mrs. Moncton, is the person
who with mine unite her thanks for
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every act of affection I have experienced from you. Some few days after you left Ireland, sending as usual to enquire after her brother's health, whom I had so unfortunately wounded, I was told he was so well recovered as to be able to sit up, but not to leave his apartment. The next morning a sealed note was delivered me to this effect, Mr. Edgar's compliments, &c. and if I was inclined to do him the favour, he should be glad of my company that afternoon: which invitation I accepted with a mixture of hope, fear, pain, and pleasure: the sight only of the servant who opened the door gave me an uneasy sensation, which increased every step till I reached Mr. Edgar's room. Your friend

and Lady Caroline S—. 171

friend was at that moment a coward, nor do I blush at the imputation ; I was not afraid of danger, but afraid to appear before a family whom my indiscretion had so highly injured. My name being pronounced before I entered, I caught a transitory glance of Mrs. Edgar as she rose hastily to go out at another door. The young gentleman received me with great politeness, made an apology that he was not able to rise from his chair, and holding out his hand shook mine very heartily, declaring from his soul he forgave me the accidental blow, which the seeming provocation I had for it perfectly justified, protesting he should have done the same had he been in my situation. This friendly reception

gave me courage; and the conversation turning on indifferent and various subjects, he discovered a strength of judgment and lively genius, surprising in so young a man. After about an hour spent in this manner, he made me the confidant of his love for Miss M'Lean, the same person my wife mentioned as a magnet used by his relations to draw him to the Romish church. You see Major, said he, having finished a lovely description of her person, the confidence I repose in you; it is your opinion I want to ask, not as an acquaintance of to-day, but as a brother, for in that light I wish, and hope soon to behold you. I thanked him warmly as my heart directed, and taking so favourable an opportunity,

and Lady Caroline S——. 173

nity, begged to know if I might be allowed the happiness of paying my respects to his sister that evening. He said, she knew not of my being with him, that he chose to receive me in her absence, having a design in it, which the event of a few hours would discover; that his mother was acquainted with the favour I did him, and would pay her compliments to me at the tea-table, his sister being gone out to call on a sick friend. Now Major, continued he, give me your candid sentiments of my mistress; are not my mother and sister unreasonable in requesting me to give up my inclination for her? Do you think it possible that I should comply? Would you resign the hope of possessing Emily to the scruples

of a prejudiced way of thinking? Dear Moncton, tell me sincerely. The confidence with which you honour me, replied I, is a singular proof of the generosity of your sentiments. To convince you that I wish to deserve your friendship, I will even venture to put it to the risk, valuable as it is held by me, rather than endeavour to preserve it at the price of your future happiness, by being silent when you permit me to place before you what I think reasonable objections to your alliance with Miss M'Lean. He desired me to go on, with an air of good humour, of which I never saw a countenance more expressive; and assured me he should take kindly every thing I said, though he foresaw his inclinations had little to expect

and Lady Caroline S——. 175

pect from my expostulations. I shall not expostulate, my dear Sir, returned I; allow me only to answer the questions you were just now pleased to ask me. As to the person of Miss M'Lean, I have conceived an idea of beauty capable of captivating the most guarded of our sex: yet may not there be concealed in that lovely cabinet a designing heart? and may not that be the close repository of artifice, and dissimulation, too securely locked up for the eyes of a lover to penetrate? I am no stranger to your situation. When you first became acquainted with this Lady, was not persuasion used to bring you to the house of Mr. O Donnel, the enemy of your family? Was she not sent for

to meet you there? Was not a marriage to be clandestinely huddled up, without consulting your friends, and even without giving you time to consider the effects of such a connection? Did this proceed from affection, from that delicate disinterested tenderness, which you might expect from a woman who returned your passion, with a view only to your mutual happiness? Consider, Sir, the attempts that had been before made to take you from your parent, and the unerring principles of your faith; and if you can then think there was no design form'd to your prejudice, if you still believe her worthy of your love, I will no longer hazard the loss of your esteem by opposing it. I waited for an
answer,

answer, by which I might judge whether the liberty I had taken displeased him: observing he looked more thoughtful and grave, I apprehended I had gone too far, but a servant coming up with the tea equipage, and Mrs. Edgar just then entering, we were obliged to drop our conversation; nor have I from that hour had occasion to re-assume it. The old Lady received me, as if nothing disagreeable had been the motive of my long absence from her house, enquiring kindly after my health: her goodness covered me with confusion; and my consternation being visible to Mr. Edgar, he obligingly relieved me, by testifying the pleasure he promised himself in my acquaintance, declar-

ing he should regret nothing so much as any accident that could check our growing friendship: after which none but general topics were touched on. As the evening approached, my new friend betrayed great impatience for the return of his sister, frequently enquiring if she was not yet come back from her visit. Just as I was taking my leave, she entered, more charming than ever; and not knowing me present, started back with every token of astonishment. I flew to her, I trembled with conscious unworthiness; I bent one knee to her superior virtue; she desired me to rise; her surprise was great; she grew pale and red alternately; I begged to be forgiven; I called heaven to witness, that

that I had already suffered for my crime. Mrs. Edgar came to us, she took her daughter's hand, Rife Major, my child does not yet know you for the friend of her brother. She replied not; I obeyed, and led her to a seat next his. He seemed greatly affected with our meeting, and laying his hand on my shoulder, This, Emme, said he, is the man I am ambitious to call my friend; you may or you may not give him to me in that light; if you are disposed to oblige me, you shall find me grateful. The aversion my mother and you have shewn to my alliance with Miss M^cLean has at length determined me to give her up. Will you indeed, my dear son? Will you indeed, brother? both throwing their
arms

arms about him. But hear me out, continued he: as Mr. Moncton has had a principal share in fixing my determination, by placing the behaviour of the most artful of women in its proper light, I shall insist on his being rewarded with your hand; a condition that must be complied with. In short, I had such advocates in the mother and son, joined to my own sollicitation, the agreeable condition annexed, and a certain something in her own breast, that, before I ended my visit, she consented to my renewing it as often as I pleased; which gave me a flow of spirits, that so much frightened honest James at my return, as to make him conclude me downright mad; and it was some time before I

I

could

and Lady Caroline S — . 181

could persuade him there was no need of the doctor. From that day I had unconstrained admission to my Emily; and as soon as Mr. Edgar was able to go abroad, he presented me with her hand, a gift, the value of which will never lessen by possession. Mrs. Edgar has some affairs to transact in Ireland; when they are settled, I shall thank my dear Worthley in person, as she and my brother intend residing in England. When you think of the friend that loves you most, it will be of your

MONCTON.

Lady

Lady FRANCES WORTHLEY to
Mrs. WORTHLEY.

WE have been very busy for some days past, preparing for the nuptials of Miss Hamilton and sir Burton Randolph; which were yesterday celebrated in a splendid and agreeable manner; but I shall wave a particular account of it, till I can give you a verbal one: that wished for time draws near; we have received my uncle's summons to meet you next month at the castle; Mr. Temple is already gone, and we propose following him in a fortnight: what pleasure in expectation? this I have often felt, and do now experience. I am rejoiced to hear Mr. Moncton's
affair

and Lady Caroline S——. 183

affair has ended so well for him and for the Lady: he writes Mr. Worthley, that we are soon to see them in England; I wish it may be before we leave the castle, as we may then possibly prevail on them to add to the number of our delighted circle. You can't imagine the joy we all propose, nothing else is talk'd of, nothing else thought of; and, for my part, sleeping or waking, my thoughts are wholly ingrossed by it; yet has our time been spent at Ashly Park in a manner, that, were it possible, even happiness might envy. I had this day an affectionate letter from my mother; her Grace is still anxious for my sister, desires me to be particular in my answer, whether she has quite recovered the shock
she

she so lately suffered ; for though she writes to her and my father in a chearful stile, they are uneasy, lest her health might be affected, which will oblige me to shorten my letter to you, in order to assure them that true ease and felicity were never pictured stronger than in Lady Ormsby, nor was she ever half so sprightly since I first knew her ; she plays, dances, or sings, from morning till night, and gains the heart of every one that visits in the family ; her Lord doats on her ; the Earl idolizes her ; and the flow of spirits she now enjoys, seems to renew the youth of Mr. Nevison, and fill his old veins with a new tide of life ; never sister loved another with the fondness I do. Think then, my dear
madam,

and Lady Caroline S — . 185

madam, what pleasure this happy change must give the heart of your affectionate.

Mrs. TEMPLE to Miss

WENTWORTH.

WHAT a damp does the absence of my dear mother, and of you, my Harriot, strike on the enjoyments that court me at this heavenly place!—Envious gout, to destroy the pleasure we proposed in being together; but thank God it only affects her toe; should it fly to any part more dangerous, remember your promise; send for me, as you value my affection; write to me every day what progress it makes, and whether it is likely to take its leave.

leave. Lord Henry was greatly disappointed, so was Mr. Temple, on receiving us at the castle gate, not to find you in our number; but both seemed more satisfied when I gave them the reason that detained you, and made known your intentions of joining us, as soon as my mother's disorder would permit. His Lordship having welcomed us with his accustomed politeness, conducted us to an apartment where the Duke, Duchess, and Mrs. Worthley, who arrived a few hours before, were refreshing themselves with coffee; after paying us a general compliment as we entered, Lord Henry led Lady Randolph to the Duchess, when she received hers and the Duke's congratulations: every one
was

and Lady Caroline S——. 187

was then particularly received by them, affectionately embracing Lady Frances and Lady Caroline, as did Mrs. Worthley. There is still a vast haughtiness in the Duchess's appearance, which I believe must be natural to her; for it is visible she endeavours to throw it off in her conversation, which great sense, and a thorough knowledge of the world, render extremely entertaining. The Duke has a fine person, good judgment, and an easiness of disposition, from which have proceeded all Lady Frances's sufferings. He now pours his endearments profusely on both the Ladies, still following the example of his Duchess, who is every moment careffing them, and has again thanked Lady Lucy and
Lady

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Lady Randolph for their former tenderness to them; presenting to the former a watch studded with diamonds; at the same time that she desired my cousin's acceptance of a necklace of great value. It was too late the first evening of our arrival, for me to have any other view of the situation than from the windows, which rather increased than gratified my curiosity: I longed impatiently for the morning; Lady Frances observed it, and whispered me, she would go as early as I pleased into the woods, or any of the walks round the castle, which obliging offer I gladly accepted. Cards being proposed, we amused ourselves with them till supper, where a band of music attended; in short, every thing
that

and Lady Caroline S——. 189

that could regale the taste, or delight the understanding, seemed present; sprightly repartee void of satire, entertaining wit, and unaffected pleasure, led on the smiling hours, till nature spoke in our eyes, that she wanted that repose, which the fatigues of travelling had robbed her of. The next morning I was awakened from a sweet sleep, by a gentle tap at my door: recollecting my appointment I stole softly from the side of Mr. Temple, whom the summons had not disturbed, and joined lady Frances, who, as I suspected, waited for me in the anti-chamber. We had scarce paid each other the compliments of the morning, when Mr. Worthley came to us, and all three immediately walked to the park, and
from

from thence into that wood, which my cousin described, on her first visit, sacred to contemplation. My two conductors, who had so often trod this path together, painted out to me every material alteration that has been made in it since that time; thus did we strole on for near a mile, now admiring the beauties we were in pursuit of, now extolling the princely mind of Lord Henry. Mr. Worthley left us about ten minutes in the Druids temple; when he returned, he requested us to go further into the wood, and being as ready to follow as he to lead, we struck across several walks into one, in the thickest part, which had in its appearance a gloom next to horror; it looked like the dark abode of
night,

night, from which light and heat were both excluded; and beneath ran a river, that in a continual murmur added to the solemn pensiveness of the place. Lady Frances said she liked to frequent it in a warm summer's day, when she most wished to enjoy contemplation, but declared she thought it so early in the year more horrible than agreeable. Our friend, replied the Colonel, the friend of mankind, knows how to make even gloom and darkness subservient to his great design of beautifying nature; but since, continued he, you dislike the solitude to which I have conducted you, I this moment banish it your sight; and taking two handkerchiefs from his pocket, humorously bound them over our eyes,

eyes, we laughing and threatening revenge, he hurrying us along, having a hand of each. We had been blinded but a few minutes, when I perceived myself off the gravel, and walking upon turf up an ascent, which made us insist on being restored to sight, but in vain, still ascending, still imploring. We did not regain the liberty of our eyes, till we reached the summit of a fine knoll, where nature went before, followed by art, who with a skilful pencil, and sportive fancy, enriched her loose robe with various beauties. At the top of the ascent, which is not extremely high, but exactly regular, stood a noble building, not only new to me, but to Lady Frances, and had been so to Mr. Worthley, till he that morning

morning discovered it. The entrance is a superb dome supported by Corinthian pillars; an elegant statue of Mercury invited us to approach, who stands on the right as you enter, holding out a scroll of invitation; he faces you with a smile on his countenance, and with an air of importance points one hand to Hymen, who is placed in the center, and with the other beckons you forward to a room fronting, the inside of which I have not yet seen, for to our great mortification we found it inaccessible, the door being locked. The statue of Hymen is so excellently performed, that one would be apt to believe the fable of Prometheus had been here realized, and breath given to the lifeless

figure. Nor does Purity, who in the form of a lovely nymph stands by his side, speak a less masterly artist; the extreme whiteness of the marble, the delicate turn of the shape, the inexpressible modesty of her look, good God! what a lively representation of the deity! She is taking off a saffron-coloured mantle, thrown loosely over the shoulders of Hymen, and in her hand holds this inscription, done in letters of gold, LET NOT THE UNHALLOWED FOOT OF VICE ENTER THIS TEMPLE, CONSECRATED BY ME AND DEDICATED TO HYMEN, WHOSE HANDMAID I AM. On the right of these two figures are placed Urania and the Graces, on the left a group of little Cupids, with different instruments, proclaiming the presence

sence of Hymen. These statues are all I can yet describe, unless it is the extensive view from the temple, the gloomy walk which we before objected was here a principal beauty, your eye being led from off the velvet turf, enriched with every kind of shrub, quite up through it, and the end of it terminated by the south front of the castle, whilst the park, an arm of the sea, and a country diversified with hill and dale, contribute their several ornaments to complete the elegant design, which, Mr. Temple has since told me, Lord Henry formed in honour to his nieces and their husbands. A servant being dispatched from the castle, we returned to it a nearer way, and found all our company, except

Lord Henry, assembled in the Duchess's dressing room. As we came in full of the enchanting spot, the Colonel described it with such encomiums, as raised all their curiosities. In the midst of our conversation, his Lordship came into the room, and every one congratulated him on his refined taste in the new plan he had executed. This is not fair, my friend, said his Lordship, turning to Mr. Temple, you have discovered our secret. I plead Not guilty, my Lord, replied he, it was accident that betrayed it. Mr. Worthley then gave the same account I have already given you, of his finding it out, and my good man of course was cleared from any breach of trust. To-morrow, said his Lordship,

ship, I intend to receive you in that temple, and have invited a select party to be at the opening of it. No praise is due to me, either in the design or execution of the building; the first was inspired by the happiness of these two Ladies, pointing to Lady Frances and Lady Caroline, whose eyes at that moment sparkled with additional lustre; and for all the beauty of the last, I am indebted to the extensive genius of Mr. Temple. I will not lengthen out my narrative with a detail of compliments, &c. that passed on this occasion. As soon as we had breakfasted, our coaches were at the door; so breaking off a lively conversation, we took an agreeable airing till near one. Lady Frances

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called on Lady Mary Frampton,
who answers the engaging picture
you have already had of her ; she
yielded to the earnest solicitations of
Lady Frances, and favoured us with
her company back to the castle,
where the day was passed in walking,
conversation, and music ; the evening
began with cards, and ended in a
dance, a deal of company dropping
in, so that we made ten couple
and three card-tables ; it was late
when we retired, which has detain-
ed the ladies in their beds longer
than usual. It is now past ten, and not
one of them yet come from their
apartments. I have been writing
these two hours in momentary ex-
pectation of their appearance. This
is Thursday, and the day when the
temple

and Lady Caroline S——. 199

temple of Hymen is to be honoured with a brilliant assembly.—Make haste, my dear mother and sister, to share with me the refined enjoyments of this place. Adieu.

To the Same.

Friday morning.

SUPPOSE the company numerous, dresses superb, countenances chearful, conversation polite, and actions flowing from minds filled with the truest sense of virtue and greatness: suppose the two amiable sisters presiding with ease, dignity, and sweetness: suppose Lord Henry, by his inimitable affability, encouraging those of inferior to consider themselves of equal rank; whilst

how!

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those

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those born to the same honours must behold with pleasure his fair example. Such was the splendid assembly, chosen to grace the temple of Hymen, which we entered about five. How beautiful, how gay, appeared the green carpet! As the company ascended the sun shone full upon them, it seemed to overlook that spot with its whole influence; to its bright rays our silks were indebted for colours, that the industrious silk-worm or the ingenious artificer could not have bestowed: in short, it brought to my memory a passage of a certain great poet, who compares such an assembly to a bed of variegated tulips.—No longer are we debarred access, the folding doors flew open, and we all followed

lowed her Grace into a magnificent entertaining room, part of the furniture of which I intend describing; but to do it with the exactness I could wish, I will by and by steal half an hour from the company, when they go to their dressing rooms, and finish my letter in the temple. But first let me tell you the charming celebration of this festival; the music was scattered about the wood in such a manner, that though surrounded by it, no one could discover the orchestra. French horns, drums, trumpets, and every kind of warlike sound filled the air; yet at so proper a distance, that the melodious flute, the shepherd's warbling pipe, and various sorts of sweet instruments were distinctly heard. In the dome

were laid several tables filled with wine and sweetmeats, which Lord Henry told us were to regale some of Hymen's votaries in honour to the day. He then desired we would place ourselves at the windows, to see his guests make their entry into the temple. You might have read of magic, incantations, of enchanter's wands, which have raised a castle in a desert, or turned a wilderness into groves and gardens; but I tell you all those extraordinary fables could not have afforded a more pleasing sight, than that which reality presented us with in the woods of Audly Castle. When every fixed eye was in eager expectation, a young man with a lute in his hand, habited like a shepherd, approached
so

so near, that we could hear these words distinctly, in a voice full as sweet and harmonious as that of the famous Mr. Beard :

I.

Come, my shepherds, come away,
This is Hymen's festal day ;
Waste no time, but follow here,
Homage pay, and rites prepare.
Come, my shepherds, come a-
way, &c.

II.

Come, my nymphs, with modest air,
Like the season mild and fair ;
Come, by Virtue led along,
Haste and join in Hymen's song.
Some, my nymphs, with modest
air, &c.

III See

III.

See how worth and virtuous love
Call down blessings from above ;
See the bright example shine
In Ormsby and his Caroline ; [prest
See truth and goodness strong im-
In Worthley and his Fanny's breast.

IV.

Come, my shepherds, come away,
This is Hymen's festal day ;
Come, my nymphs, with modest air,
Like the season mild and fair.

At which musical invitation advanced from behind several trees and shrubs, where they had before been concealed, a troop of shepherds and shepherdesses, dressed like the former, who sung as follows :

SHEP-

and Lady Caroline S——. 205

SHEPHERDS. We come, we come.

SHEPHERDESSES. Behold us here.

ALL. With joy we attend the glad
rites to prepare,

In honour of virtue, in honour of love,
Let the tabor strike up and resound
thro' the grove.

Here the whole band of music joined in chorus, the effect of which was charming beyond what I can describe. The two amiable pair to whom the songs were addressed, looked silently in grateful love on Lord Henry; every one was in raptures, every one strove to express their approbation; but what most delighted me was, to see the young men take out their partners, some of whom were extremely lovely, and after a short
dance

dance led them into the dome, where having refreshed themselves with the collation prepared for them, we all thronging to the door to observe their motions, a girl about eighteen, the emblem of beauty and innocence, dressed in a long white robe, went round and untied the garlands of flowers that bound the crooks of her companions, and hung those of the women about the statue of Purity, and those of the men on that of Hymen; which ceremony being performed, all retired into the castle, where they were to rejoice the rest of the evening. The whole wood round the castle was illuminated; a sight, the grandeur of which is not to be conceived; particularly the dark walk, which the most piercing star could

and Lady Caroline S——. 207

could never penetrate, shone with incredible lustre; some hundred lamps adorned its venerable trees, and a great number of lights being placed in that front of the castle, it appeared from the eminence from which we beheld it, to be altogether the work of enchantment. The ball was begun by Lady Frances and Lord Gosmont, and the company returned to the castle about three, being conveyed back in chairs provided for that purpose. And now, my dear, I must once more carry you back to the temple, in order to fulfil my promise, and exhibit to your mind's eye the principal ornaments of the inner room; therefore adieu till I reach it. Here am I just entered this most magnificent apartment,
though

though alone in the midst of desirable company, though silent, conversing with them. I shall introduce you first, my dear Harriot, to the Duke and Duchess of S—, who, at the head of the room, seem to expect your approach, and ready to leave the canvases to receive and welcome you; these are two portraits at full length, taken from their original pictures, when youth and beauty gave charms to the pencil of a skillful painter; but by the device of Lord Henry, they are here placed in the same piece; their hands united, and the Duke's eyes turned on the Duchess with ineffable pleasure. But let us not fix ours too attentively on them; here are others that will engage your whole attention; the first of
which

heavenly conductor, whose hand is stretched out to receive her. Turn now to the right of his Lordship, and observe the good Mrs. Worthley, whose clasped hands are lifted up, whilst her eyes are fixed on her son and Lady Frances, like one contemplating her riches, at the same time that she thanks the bestower of them. That a painter should represent the outward form exact, is not surprising; but that he should, in more lively colours, the interior beauties, the different passions of human nature, amazes me, and seems as if he studied the graces of the mind before he could attempt those of the person. On the right of the Duke and Duchess, Mr. Worthley and his graceful bride, on the left Lord Ormsby

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Ormsby and his blooming Caroline, inspire you with the highest idea of love, innocence, and felicity. On the left of Lord Henry, Mr. Nevison, with goodness, piety, and pleasure in his aspect, calls for all your attention and admiration : he smiles on Lady Caroline ; he lays his hand on his venerable breast ; and, as I stand gazing on the faint-like figure, I can fancy his lips move ; that he speaks, that he tells us, all within is peace ; that he is happy in this life, yet hopes a more glorious reward in eternity. Think not, my dearest Harriot, these thoughts are improper for a heathen temple : the wiser heathens had all the same hope with Mr. Nevison, though not with the same certainty. Mr. Temple brings me a welcome letter from you ; the joy I feel at my
mo-

mother's recovery is unutterable, and the pleasure I propose in seeing you soon, puts a stop to my scribblings, as you will then be a witness of every charm which my pen has but very faintly described. The Ladies, attended by Lord Henry and the other gentlemen, are now ascending the green slope. Mr. Temple says they come to rejoice with me in the dear expectation with which your letter has filled my bosom; though they all so eagerly long for my mother's and your presence, no one can so ardently wish for that moment, as your happy and affectionate sister.

Here the correspondence drops between the two Ladies, Mrs. Wentworth and her daughter going down to the castle soon after the last letter.

F I N I S.

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